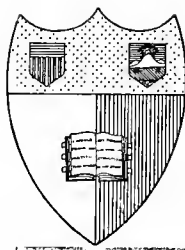


*The first
of the
Hoosiers*

*George Cary
Eggleston*



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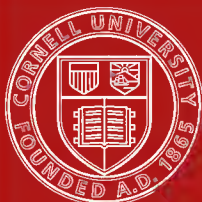
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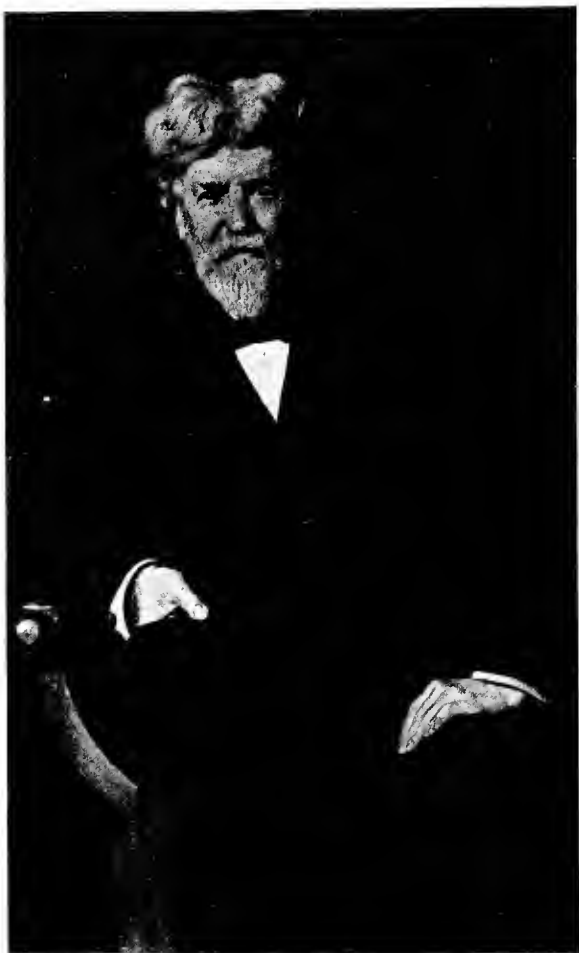


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EDWARD EGGLESTON, IN 1897

From an oil painting by Irving R. Wiles, on the walls of
The Authors Club, New York

The

First of *the* Hoosiers

Reminiscences of
EDWARD EGGLESTON

And of that Western life
which he, first of all men,
celebrated in literature and
made famous.  



— By —
**GEORGE CARY
EGGLESTON**

Author of "A Rebel's Recollections,"
"American Immortals," "A Caroline
Cavaller," "Dorothy South" "The
Master of Werlock," etc., etc., etc.

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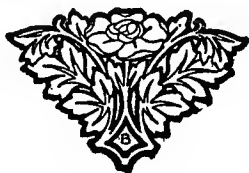
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CHAPTER I.

The Author's Commission.



THIS is a book about Edward Eggleston; about the people, great and small with whom he held close relations during a life of singularly varied activity; about the things that interested him, the causes in which his superb enthusiasm was enlisted, the work he did in the world, the spirit in which he did it, and other matters that connect themselves with him in the minds of those who knew him best.

It is not a biography, in the ordinary sense of that term, though it relates all of fact concerning the life of its subject, that a formal biography would include. It is rather a study of the man, his work, and his surroundings at various periods of his life, as these things are remembered by the author.

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One day in the early summer of 1902, after Edward began fully to realize, as his physicians did not, that the end of his life was drawing near, he somewhat painfully made his way through the woodlands, from his Lake George Cottage to mine—a few hundred yards distant—and for the last time in his life sat down in my porch. He was extremely feeble, I remember; it was painful for him to walk, and even rising from a chair or seating himself in one was a matter of some difficulty. But his life long cheerfulness of spirit endured, and he faced death with a calm mind and quite uncomplainingly. A year or two before the visit of which I am now writing he had been stricken in a way that threatened his early end, and writing to me of the fact he had said:

“I am content and happy. I have had a life of enjoyable activity. I have been permitted to render some service to my generation. I have lived. If the end is near I have

The Author's Commission

neither reason nor disposition to complain. On the contrary, I shall be happy to the end and in the end."

As he sat there in my porch on the occasion of his last visit, looking out upon the calmly beautiful bay, he turned to me and said:

"Geordie"—he always had a pet name for every one whom he loved, and from boyhood this had been his pet name for me—"Geordie, after I die some of the publishers may want to print a little book about me. If they do, I want you to write the book. You are the only person living who has known me all my life, and you have known me with a degree of sympathetic intimacy impossible to any other. You have known all my purposes and plans and ambitions; you have shared many of them and you have understood even those that you did not share. We were little children together, boys together, young men together, men of middle age together, and now we

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are growing old together. Another thing: in pretty nearly every article that has ever been written concerning me there have been mistakes made and misapprehensions, until many persons who know me only through my writings, actually think I was born in poverty and reared in an ignorance like that of the characters in "The Hoosier Schoolmaster,"—an ignorance from which I am supposed to have escaped by my own exertions. If you write of me you will correct all that. Anyhow, I want you to write the book if any book is to be written."

Thus I received the commission which I here endeavor lovingly to fulfil. In doing so I shall not closely follow any preconceived order of narrative or comment. Where the mention of matters connected with one part of Edward Eggleston's life brings to my mind interesting matters relating to any other part of it, I shall not hesitate to make the transition for the sake of a better and truer unity than any that a rigid adherence

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to the chronological order could possibly secure.

On the title page of this volume I call my brother "The First of the Hoosiers." I do so because he was the very first to perceive and utilize in literature the picturesqueness of the Hoosier life and character, the first to appreciate the poetic and romantic possibilities of that life and to invite others to share with him his enjoyment of its humor and his admiration for its sturdy manliness.

Other men of rare literary gifts have followed in his footsteps in this richly flowering field, but he was the first to venture upon it. He was the pathfinder. Until he wrote "The Hoosier Schoolmaster," and moved the readers of more than one nation to laughter and tears, nobody had ever made the smallest attempt to turn the Hoosier life and character to any artistic account.

He selected that field for his work in fiction with deliberation and earnest conviction.

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tion. He reminded me at the time that the Dutch painters never produced anything of value in art until they ceased to go to Italy for their subjects and began to paint their own homely Dutch interiors and landscapes and people instead. It was his fixed conviction that whether in the graphic or in the literary art no man can do his best work unless he chooses for his subject a life which he thoroughly knows.

And Edward Eggleston knew the ruder side of the Hoosier life and character all the better for the reason that in his childhood and youth he had been "in it but not of it." He had seen it in perspective. He always had something better in his own home and associations, by which to measure the rudeness that showed itself all about him.

The peculiarities of the Hoosier dialect interested him chiefly because of their wide departure from the good English which alone he heard at home. When he wrote "The Hoosier Schoolmaster" he was in his

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early thirties, and had for years been a dweller in great cities. But his memory of the life, the character and the dialect that had so intensely interested him in his boyhood was vivid and accurate in an extreme degree, and so effectively did he present them in literature that "The Hoosier Schoolmaster," after being serially published in many periodicals, outsold any novel of its time in book form, and in new editions it continues to sell better to-day than most new books do. It attracted attention abroad also. It was translated into French and published in a noted French periodical. It was translated into German, the translator using what we call "Pennsylvania Dutch" in lieu of the Hoosier dialect. Concerning the French translation, the Rev. Washington Gladden wrote in the *Independent* that he had not yet seen it, but was eager for a sight of it for the reason that he strongly desired to know the classic French form of "Gee Whillicky Crickets!"

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In making effective literary use of the Hoosier life, character and dialect, Edward Eggleston was as truly the pioneer as Bret Harte was in doing the like for the mining camps. It is in every way proper, therefore, that I call him "The First of the Hoosiers."

CHAPTER II.

A Little Love Story and Other Matters.

Y earliest recollection of my brother—or of myself either for that matter—is that of two little fellows chasing fireflies on a lawn on the bank of the Ohio river, five or six miles below Vevay, Indiana. It was a sultry evening, and the entire family sat out of doors. Our father had stretched a thin silk handkerchief over his tall hat so that we might put our fireflies into the hat and see them “lighten” under the thin silk.

That father was a man of far more than ordinary gifts, both of intellect and of acquirement. The son of an old Virginia planter family, and of a father who had been a captain in Washington’s army at Yorktown, our father had taken his degree in arts at William and Mary College—at that

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time a famous seat of learning. After that he had studied law in the law school of Judge Tucker, at Winchester. Upon his graduation in law he had gone to the West to see what use he might make of his natural and acquired gifts in a region which was then the promised land to young men of character and ability.

Settling himself at Vevay he soon achieved a foremost place for himself at the bar and in public life, serving with marked distinction in the Indiana State Senate.

But he did not permit his devotion to the law or his public activities to divert him from intellectual occupations of a finer kind. He surrounded himself with books in English and French, giving his leisure to the reading of philosophy, history and *belleslettres*.

The educated people of that region held him in high esteem, while the uneducated cherished the fixed conviction that he "knew everything." That, of course, was

A Little Love Story and Other Matters

not true, but he knew much of science, as well as of law, letters and history; and it was his habit to explain things most fascinatingly to his children whenever occasion arose. I suppose he told us something about insect life on that sultry August evening when he let us imprison the fireflies in his hat. If he did, I was too young to remember the instruction. I recall only the fun of it all.

The story of our father's marriage with our mother is interesting enough to be told here, particularly as it gives opportunity to explain what manner of men and women Edward Eggleston's forebears were on the mother's side. Our maternal grandfather, George Craig, was a Kentuckian, of early pioneer stock—descended from men who sturdily bore their part in "the winning of the West." His wife, Jane Lowry, was also Kentuckian, of that Scotch-Irish blood which played so large a part in the Revolution and the Indian wars.

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Together these two crossed the river, setting their negroes free, and buying great areas of fertile land in Indiana. George Craig was a man of unusual intelligence and indomitable energy. He had all of education that could be secured in the Kentucky of his boyhood, and he soon came to be the foremost man in all southeastern Indiana.

He built stoutly of stone, while those about him were content with log cabins to live in. He planted large orchards even after he had reached the age of seventy years. He maintained a nursery of young trees, and was the first man in all that country to produce improved varieties of apples and other fruits by selection and careful cultivation. To this day there are grown in that region apples that bear his name, because it was he who originated the varieties. The bar in the river is still Craig's bar; the township in which he lived is Craig township, and the country all about still bears witness to an energy and intelligence that

A Little Love Story and Other Matters

enabled that one man to scrawl "George Craig, his mark," all over the land.

His influence was in every way good and for good. He had no patience with clumsy, shiftless methods where better could be devised. He built a great stone "dry house," which I remember very well, though it was burned while I was yet a boy. Its upper story was for the storage of all farm produce that frost might injure, and the entrance to that story was reached, not by a stairway, but by a gently inclined plane of hewn beams, up which barrels might be easily rolled. Below were other storage rooms for farm implements—for he would never tolerate the practice, common among farmers even yet, of leaving farm implements wherever they were last used. He insisted that everything, from a rake or a plow to a hoe, should be housed when not in use.

But the most interesting part of the dry house was its basement. It was the practice of the people of that region, when

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they wished to make soap, or render out lard, or preserve fruits, to hang a kettle out of doors and build a fire under it. Our grandfather regarded this as a shiftless proceeding, and so, in the basement of his dry house he built long stone furnaces, with big and little kettles set into them, and, with broad areas left bare for the purpose of drying fruits upon them. Here every year, at a minimum cost of labor, the lard from some hundreds of hogs was rendered, the soap for family use was made, the preserves were put up, the apples and peaches dried, and everything else done that required the use of a kettle or a flat stone with fire under it.

Not content with this, George Craig sought convenience in handling the great quantities of apples which he grew for shipment by flatboat to New Orleans. To that end he built a very long structure, called the apple house. It could be opened at both ends, and a wagon road ran through it, on

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either side of which were great bins, into which the apples were unloaded from the wagons until the time should come for barreling and shipping them.

Such a man was an influence for good in the community, and both by precept and by example he taught his neighbors much of thrift and energy that it was good for them to learn. He had a family of boys and girls of his own, numerous enough to satisfy even President Roosevelt's idea of good citizenship; but he added several adopted ones to the number. These were the children of the poorest of his neighbors, who could scarcely put bread into the mouths of their numerous broods. When George Craig found one of these poverty-hampered children, who gave promise of ability, he adopted the child and gave him the best education that the schools of that time and country afforded. In every case, I believe, these adopted ones justified his judgment and his generosity by becoming

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successful men or women, and one of them at least—Sam Parker—became the most distinguished lawyer of his time in Indiana and a State Senator of more than ordinary influence. But for his adoption by George Craig he would probably never have learned even to read.

Edward's mother and mine was one of George Craig's many daughters, and our father met her in her father's house on the bank of the Ohio five or six miles below Vevay. He had gone thither to draw up some deeds or upon some other such law business, as he had frequently done before. He was to stay over night, and during the evening the shrewdly intelligent old pioneer drew the highly educated and intellectual young lawyer into a conversation of more than ordinary interest.

In those days tallow candles were the only artificial lights in use, and each family manufactured them in tin moulds. These moulds consisted of a group of candle-

A Little Love Story and Other Matters

shaped tubes fastened together into a tin plate at top. In our grandfather's house, one of these tubes had become detached from the frame.

Our mother, then a girl of eighteen or nineteen, wished to light a candle for some purpose, but, by mistake, got the loose candle-mould instead. She was a girl of eager mind, and when she went to light her candle, she became deeply interested in something that the young lawyer was saying, and for a time she stood holding the point of the tin tube in the flame of a candle on the table at her father's elbow. Presently the young lawyer observed her and told her of her mistake, to her great confusion. But he observed also how deeply interested the girl had become in what he was saying, and was surprised that she should know or care anything about the subject of his talk. So for the first time he entered into conversation with her, and found to his astonishment that this western country girl was a young

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woman of intellect, who had read a good deal with rare discretion, and who was capable of thinking soundly for herself. From that time forward he sought to draw her into conversation at every opportunity. His admiration grew into a warmer sentiment, and after a time she became his wife and a sharer in all his intellectual pursuits. She read his law books with the rest, and he used to declare that he depended more upon her counsel in dealing with perplexing law points than upon that of any lawyer at the bar.

My own reverent recollection of her presents her to my mind as one of the wisest as well as one of the gentlest of women.

The young couple took up their residence in Vevay, in a brick house which our father bought while it was in course of construction and himself finished. He built a brick office for himself in the grounds, a little way from the house. Years after his death that office served Edward and me for



THE BIRTH PLACE OF EDWARD EGGLESTON, IN VEVAY, INDIANA

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bedroom and general quarters. There was held the debating society which Edward organized. There we had our books, including a valuable collection of standard works purchased by our widowed mother with the proceeds of the sale of our father's law library, in accordance with his dying instructions.

The Vevay house, in which Edward was born on the 10th of December, 1837, stood in a square of ground about an acre in extent—or perhaps a little more. This our father had planted in fruit trees, grape vines and the like, making of it an ideal home in which to bring up boys. It has since been divided, and built over with other houses.

But at the time of the firefly frolic we were living on the farm which our mother had inherited from her father. This change had been made for the sake of our father's health, which had never been strong, and was now growing feeble.

CHAPTER III.

The Hoosier Schoolmaster's First School.



FROM the earliest days of its settlement until now, Indiana has taken the lead among Western States in all matters that concern education.

But the beginnings of education there, as in all newly peopled regions, were crude in method and meagre in scope. There were some fairly good schools in the little towns, presided over by the "Yankee school marms," whose missionary spirit early carried them across the mountains by toilsome methods of travel, and brought into the early West a culture that might otherwise have been much longer delayed in its coming. But in the country districts the schools were exceedingly rudimentary in character. Their teachers were for the most part scantily furnished with learning on their own

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account, and they knew nothing whatever of the art or the science of teaching. Pedagogy—if the word had been brought to their attention—would have meant to them nothing more than a new word to be “given out” at spelling matches for the confusion of the champion spellers of the neighborhood.

Any man who could “read, write, and cipher to the rule of three” was thought to be equipped for the mastery of a school, if he had also a strong arm and a determined will with which to maintain his mastery and keep his pupils in subjection.

But one fact was significant, and it was prophetic of that advancement in culture which Indiana has since achieved. Poor as the schools were, absolutely all the boys and girls in the district attended them. This was true even before the schools became free, and while yet each pupil's tuition must be paid for at rates varying, according to age, from fifty cents to two dollars a

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quarter. If there was not much of education to be secured in the country districts in those early days, at any rate everybody there was determined to get all of it that could be had.

It was under these conditions that Edward Eggleston entered his first school, at the age of six years. By dint of much entreaty I secured a decision, at the hands of the family conclave, permitting me also to attend the school, under the protection of our mother's "bound girl," who was, of course, to be a pupil.

In those days almost every family in tolerably comfortable circumstances had one "bound girl" or more. These were usually orphans who had been left destitute on the death of their parents. Instead of sending them to be reared in orphan asylums, of which there were none in that self-reliant land of promise, or sending them to the poorhouse, which was apt to be an exceedingly poor house indeed, the public authori-

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ties usually indentured such orphans to serve during their nonage in families able and willing to care for them. They became members of the families in every such case, and were never conscious of a condition of subjection in that simple, democratic state of existence where it was the custom of all to work, and where each did the duty that lay next to him or her, without a thought that there could be aught of humiliation in doing it, or any shame, except in neglect to do it honestly and well.

The bound girl or bound boy always went to school with the other children of the family, whenever "school kept," as the phrase went—that is to say, whenever there was a school open in the neighborhood, which was usually during three months, or, under favorable circumstances, during five or six months of each year. The indentures indeed required those to whom girls and boys were bound, to give them at least three months of schooling in each year; but the

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requirement was wholly unnecessary as a legal prescription in a generously-minded community, where public sentiment and a common moral sense impelled all parents, guardians and masters to give to every child the most and the best of education that could be secured.

The school which Edward and I first attended was in some respects interesting. It was held in a log cabin a mile or so from our house. The master was a very estimable man named Benefiel, who had taught our mother before us. He enjoyed an enviable reputation for scholarship, which I have no doubt was thoroughly well deserved. For one thing the "rule of three" had set no bounds to his mathematical acquirements. It was wonderingly said of him that "he knew the whole arithmetic," and it was darkly whispered that in addition to that he possessed certain occult knowledge which in our time would be described as an acquaintance with elementary Algebra and the rudi-

The Hoosier Schoolmaster's First School

ments of Geometry. I think I do not wrong the good man's memory or betray any confidence in saying that I met him many years afterward, when he was an old man and I a college student, and that he then confessed to me that even at the time of my earliest school days he had been able to find out the value of x in a simple equation.

But when Edward Eggleston was six years old and I four, Mr. Benefiel "kept school" upon the primitive plan that was then everywhere accepted.

There was only one point of radical difference between different schools in those days; some of them were "loud schools" and some were "still schools." Mr. Benefiel's was a "loud" school. That is to say, he required all his pupils to study their lessons "out loud," in order that he might be sure they were all studying.

Some of the pupils, as I now realize, though I did not recognize the fact at the time, were possessed of nervous systems.

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These unfortunate ones were naturally and sorely disturbed in their minds by the babel of ceaselessly wagging tongues. In order to drown the distracting sound of others' voices, these nervous ones were accustomed to raise their own voices higher and higher, and to shout louder and louder as the period of study went on.

For my own part, being a little lad of exceedingly robust physique, I mightily enjoyed this tumult. But poor Edward, a nervous and sensitive child, was tortured by it into a condition of mental helplessness in which he found it impossible to determine in his own mind whether the letters "b-a-k-e-r" in his spelling book spelled "lady" or "shady." He would go over and over the words with that conscientiousness which lashed and tortured him well-nigh to the end of his days, but all to no purpose. He simply could not force attention upon his mind in the midst of such a din.

I got off much more easily, as I remem-

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ber with a chuckle of delight even now, by means of a device of my own. I made it a practice merely to shout the vowel in the accented syllable of each word, leaving the rest of it to whatever fate chance might decree for it.

Not many moons before he left us for the long journey that each of us must make alone, I talked with Edward about all this. In the course of our conversation I said to him :

“What a troublesome conscience you had in your boyhood !”

“Yes,” he answered, with a laugh. “And its most troublesome peculiarity was its vicariousness. I have spent many sleepless nights, Geordie, in repenting of *your* sins. Since I grew old enough and wise enough to leave them to your care I have slept better.”

But in those long gone days, when he and I were little fellows, in our first school, Edward detected my trick of deceiving the master, and it mightily disturbed his con-

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science. He trudged homeward that day in a solemn silence, which no word of mine could induce him to break, though I tried hard to divert his mind, in the conviction that his silence was in some way prompted by his knowledge of some misconduct of mine. I was conscious of many things in my conduct which would not bear close scrutiny. When we reached home Edward was confronted with a new conscientious scruple, worse even than the first. He knew of no way by which he could hope to save me from the consequences of my sin of deception, except by reporting the facts to our mother. But our father, a Virginian of sternest virtue in all that touched upon honor in conduct, had taught him from infancy to regard all tale bearing as unutterably mean and unworthy of "a gentleman's son"—for that appeal to the law of *noblesse oblige* was always our father's final resort of instruction.

Thus Edward dared not relieve his conscience by making a charge of deception

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against me before the domestic tribunal presided over by our mother. . I think he must have passed as nearly a sleepless night over this matter of divided duty as it is possible for a six year old boy to spend over any trouble.

When morning came he had decided upon his course of conduct. He asked Jane, the bound girl, to walk well in front of us on the way to school. Then he took my little hand lovingly into his own scarcely larger one and expounded his thought to me. In his preternaturally old and wise way, he set forth the fact that, in doing as I had done, I had been deceiving the teacher.

I promptly admitted that. I even confessed that it had been my deliberate purpose to deceive him, and that I intended to go on doing so. I do not suppose that my four-year-old intelligence formulated the thought in those words, but I very well remember that my little baby soul was in revolt against what I vaguely perceived to be the

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injustice of requiring a poor little fellow like me to stand shoulder to shoulder with older boys and girls, some of them twenty years old or more, and do like tasks with them. I managed somehow to convey this thought to Edward's mind, and I resolutely went on with my device for equalizing matters by cheating the master out of that which I did not regard as his due.

I cannot remember now how Edward settled this affair with his vicarious conscience. Neither could he remember, when we laughingly talked of the incident at Lake George one day, a year or two before his death.

Let us return to the school. Discipline in those days always took the form of physical chastisement. On his way to school every morning the master cut and trimmed eight or ten stout beechen "switches," as they were called—ox goads would have been a fitter name. They were about five feet long and of a goodly diameter. These he

The Hoosier Schoolmaster's First School

placed on two pegs in the wall just over his desk—all of them but one. That one he kept always on his desk or in his strong right hand for instant use when needed. Thus armed for the day's work the master felt himself equipped to compel good behavior and a due advancement in learning on the part of his "scholars"—for the words "teacher" and "pupil" were not in school use at that time. It was always "the master" and "the scholars."

The belligerent method of instruction extended to every matter that required correction or any encouragement to endeavor. If a boy misspelled a word, he instantly received a sharp cut from the master's switch. If he failed to get the right answer to his "sum" he was encouraged to try harder by two or three stinging blows. If he whispered to a neighbor without first saying to the master, "Please may I speak to Johnny," the fault was treated with some severity as a grave moral delinquency, and

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punished by at least half a dozen lashes. If one of the little boys, who was too young to "take writin'," crawled upon the bench which fronted the long writing desk, and thus turned his back upon the master, an attack from the rear was sure to come quickly.

In the case of more serious offences, involving real moral delinquency, the offender was summoned to the open space in front of the master's desk, where he was required to remove his coat, if he had one, and there he was severely flogged. Not in Mr. Benefiel's school, but in another which Edward and I attended some years later in the little city of Madison, I several times saw shirts deeply stained with blood when these castigations were over.

There were here and there schoolmasters disposed to experiment in what I may properly call pedagogic penology. These sought to give the element of variety to school discipline, and to reduce the use of

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the rod somewhat, by the substitution of such devices as fools' caps, dunces' stools and the like. One of them sometimes punished a boy by making him stand on one leg till he could stand no more, and then flogging him for putting the other foot down. But such experiments were usually unsuccessful, at least in the country districts. The boys, accustomed as they were to a severer method, were apt to conclude that a master thus gently minded was "afeard" to whip them, and in most such cases they went into insolent revolt in an endeavor to see how far they might defy an authority which they deemed weakly irresolute. The struggle between the master and the scholars was continuous, and it was accounted by the boys rather as an enjoyable than a regrettable part of their school-boy life.

If the master assumed to "keep school" on a holiday, the scholars all attended. But they went to school earlier than usual, took possession there, and "locked the master

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out," barricading doors and windows and standing upon their defence. Then ensued a struggle, the master trying to force his way into the school-house and the scholars trying to keep him out. If he got in, he flogged everybody concerned. If the scholars were successful in their defence the master secured peace upon terms that were quite well understood in advance. He agreed to "treat" the school to a bushel of apples and to punish nobody for having participated in the rebellion. Just why a bushel of apples should have been so placative in a country in which everybody had unlimited apples at home, it is difficult to conjecture. Perhaps it was because apples were about the only thing available for the purpose, and because their enforced contribution marked and signaled victory on the part of the scholars. It was an unequal contest in every way. The scholars had the advantages of possession, fortification and superior numbers. But these odds were in a measure offset by

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the inequality of the stakes, as it were. The scholars risked a very painful punishment upon the chance of getting only some apples.

Sometimes the master succeeded in carrying the fort. Readers of "The Hoosier Schoolmaster" will remember that Ralph Hartsook did so. But usually the master was forced to yield the victory to the insurgent scholars.

The master's authority was by tradition held to extend for half a mile from the school-house in every direction. Any offence committed within that distance, on the way to or from school, was within the jurisdiction. When two boys had arranged to fight, or when one boy had made up his mind to thrash another, the two would walk by the same road—though their homes might lie in opposite directions—until the half mile line was passed. Then the set-to would occur, without the fear of the schoolmaster before the eyes of the combatants.

Both Edward and I could read before

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we entered our first school. Neither of us, indeed, could ever remember a time when we could not read or ride a horse, and neither ever knew when or how he learned either art. In our father's house the children "staggered against books" in their infancy, as Dr. Holmes puts the matter. But at school no account whatever was taken of our ability to read, nor were we permitted to practice that art. It was the fixed rule of the master that each scholar should "go through the spelling-book three times, twice on the book and once off the book," before beginning to read. "On the book" meant spelling and pronouncing the words, with the book before the eyes. "Off the book" meant spelling from memory as the words were given out.

In addition to the regular spelling lessons of the day, the whole school was required, as a final exercise each afternoon, to stand in one long row, called "the big spelling class," for competitive examination

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in the art. If a word was misspelled by one, it was passed to the next below, and so on till some one succeeded in spelling it correctly. The successful speller was said to have "turned down" all who had failed, and was entitled to take his place above them in the line. At the close of the exercise the scholar who stood at the head of the class was assigned to the foot of it for the next day, and a record was kept of the number of times that each had "gone foot." Some small distinction was supposed to have been achieved by the scholar whose record at the end of the term showed the greatest number of goings to the foot. This was about the only use made of the principle of rewards in the country schools of that time. No other word of praise was ever spoken by the teacher. Indeed, he would have put himself in serious danger of losing his place had he indulged any impulse he might have had to commend a pupil. It was at that time held that commendation was sure to

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spoil a child and breed vanity and conceit in his mind.

The prominence given to spelling over all other educational agencies at that time was still further emphasized by frequent "spelling matches." My brother has so fully described these that I shall not here attempt to add anything to what he wrote concerning them. His account of these contests led to their revival all over the country as a novel and amusing form of social entertainment.

One incident, however, I must relate. In "The Hoosier Schoolmaster" one Jeems or Jim Phillips is mentioned as the champion speller. The text says of him:

"Jim Phillips was a tall, lank, stoop-shouldered fellow, who had never distinguished himself in any other pursuit than spelling. Except in this one art of spelling he was of no account. He could not catch well or bat well in ball. He could not throw well enough to make his mark in that famous

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western game of Bull-Pen. He did not succeed well in any study but that of Webster's Elementary. But in that he was—to use the usual Flat Creek locution—in that he was 'a hoss.' This genius for spelling is in some people a sixth sense, a matter of intuition. Some spellers are born and not made, and their facility reminds one of the mathematical prodigies that crop out every now and then to bewilder the world. Bud Means, foreseeing that Ralph would be pitted against Jim Phillips, had warned his friend that Jim could 'spell like thunder and lightning,' and that it 'took a powerful smart speller' to beat him, for he knew 'a heap of spelling book.' To have 'spelled down the master' is next thing to having whipped the biggest bully in Hoopole county, and Jim had 'spelled down' the last three masters. He divided the hero-worship of the district with Bud Means."

While "The Hoosier Schoolmaster" was running as a serial story in *Hearth and Home*,

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the local newspaper in Edward's native town of Vevay, secured permission to publish it in instalments. It so happened that in naming his champion speller Jeems Phillips, Edward had drawn upon unconscious memory. For the actual champion speller of our boyhood's days bore precisely that name and in other ways answered closely to the description given of him in the book. When the chapters concerning him appeared in the Vevay *Reveille*, Jeems Phillips's friends began teasing him on the subject. He soon worked himself into a rage, and mounting his horse, rode into Vevay, with the avowed purpose of "lickin' that thar' editor feller," for he fully believed that the author of "The Hoosier Schoolmaster" was engaged in editing the local newspaper. The actual editor succeeded at last in convincing him that the author of the story lived in far-off New York. Going further, he explained to Jeems that so far from having put an affront upon him, Edward had been greatly cele-

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brating his attainments as a speller, and that he ought to feel pride rather than anger on such an occasion. This view of the matter commended itself to the vanity of Jeems Phillips. From that day forth he gloried in the new celebrity conferred upon him. He was the only man in that region who had been "put into a book," the only one who had sufficiently distinguished himself to deserve literary celebration. Thenceforth no gibe on that subject could ruffle him. Every mention of it ministered to his self-satisfaction.

In the spring of 1900, Edward and I revisited our native town together, and while there we heard the sequel to the story. When well advanced in years Jeems Phillips had married, and at the wedding he wore a gorgeous red and yellow flowered waistcoat. He gave it out that this highly impressive garment had been sent to him as a wedding present by the author of "The Hoosier Schoolmaster." When he had pretty well

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worn it out, he cut the cloth into bits and sold them as souvenirs to his admiring friends, who firmly believed the story of that waistcoat's origin.

During his later life, after his twenty years of minute investigation and scholarly study of the forces that had moulded life conditions in America, Edward thought he saw the reason for the excessive attention given to spelling in the early forties. It was, he thought, an instinctive effort to repair a previous neglect. He pointed out the fact, made obvious by the old writings he had studied so closely, that the original settlers in America and their immediate children spelled much better than did the men and women of the second generation. This fact he attributed to the compulsory neglect of education by a generation engaged in subduing the wilderness. In the same way, during the strenuous time of the "winning of the West," there had been little opportunity for education, and, when a little later


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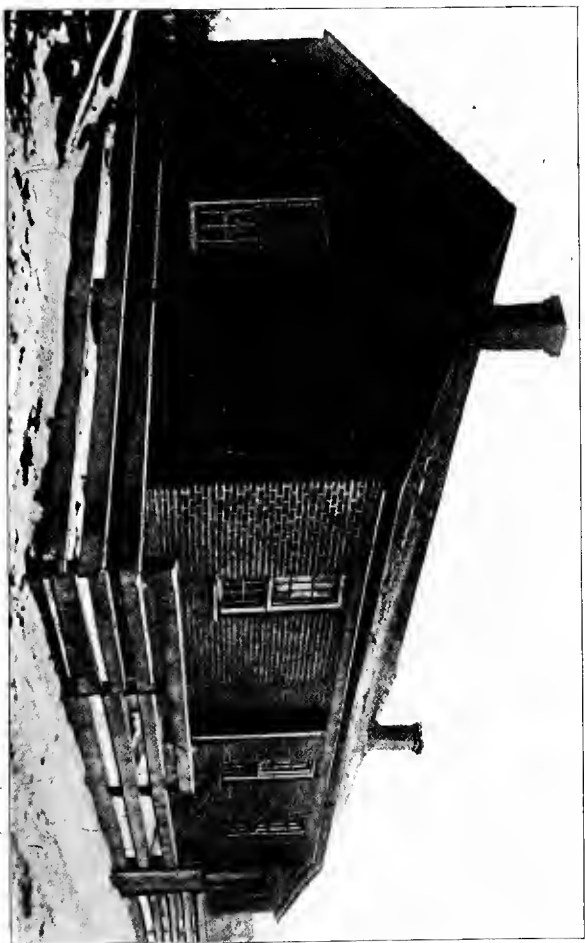
the people of the West began to realize their deficiency, they set to work to repair it in the persons of their children. As that deficiency showed itself more glaringly in the matter of spelling than in any other, it was altogether natural that the new generation should give great and even excessive attention to the acquirement of that one art.

If the reader is curious to know how excessively bad the spelling of an otherwise well educated and accomplished person can be, he is advised to read Mrs. Ravenel's very charming and interesting collection of the letters of Eliza Pinckney—born Eliza Lucas. No better educated or more variedly accomplished gentlewoman than Mrs. Pinckney lived in all the land in the Colonial times. Yet she spelled "hot" with two "t"s, always wrote "sopose" for suppose, and spelled generally in the erratic fashion that these two examples would suggest.

CHAPTER IV.

Vevay and the People of Southern Indiana

OW long our attendance upon Mr. Benefiel's school continued I am unable to say with certainty, but I think it lasted throughout the winter and spring months. During the next three years we were only twice placed in school, and then only for brief periods. The schools we then attended were what the English call "Dames' schools." Each of them was taught by a lady, and the pupils were all little children. I remember that one of these ladies was a worthy German woman who could speak but little English, and that so brokenly that we found it difficult to understand her. Whether or not Edward learned anything in those two schools I do not know. I am very sure I did not. But the companionship of children of our own age,



OLD SCHOOLHOUSE IN VEVAY. (Still Standing).

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without the terror of the flogging system overshadowing it, was good for both of us.

For the rest, our mother taught us lovingly and well at home, though she had two younger children and our father, whose health was rapidly declining, to care for. She was always a duty loving woman, and a brave one, who faced adverse conditions with courage and cheerfulness.

We two boys lived much out of doors during that period of three years, and we were very happy. Indoors we helped when any entertainment was in preparation, by attending to pigs or fowls that were roasting in front of the great cavernous kitchen fireplace—for at that time no such thing as a cooking stove was known. The fowls and pigs to be roasted were hung by strings from the ceiling, and it was our duty to keep the strings twisted so that the roasts should continually revolve. We were expected also to baste the meats with their own juices, from the dripping pans below.

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For outdoor employments we had only to convoy the cows to and from the pasture twice a day, and in the autumn to throw corn to the hogs in the pen. Of these animals there were a hundred or so on the farm. During the summer they ran wild in the woods on a high hill, growing lean and healthy under conditions that were natural to them. In the autumn they were driven in and confined in a great pen, enclosed by a rail fence. Here they were fed upon unlimited corn, in order to fatten them quickly. Edward and I mightily rejoiced in throwing corn to them and listening to their crunching of the grains as they ate. So great was our enjoyment of this sport that we often sacrificed our own breakfasts rather than leave the neighborhood of the pig-pen.

"Hog killing time" meant even more than Christmas did to us. It came in December, when the weather was sharply cold. The slaughtering was usually done on the river beach, where a great bonfire was made

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and filled with stones, while casks were sunk into the sand and filled with water. When the stones were at white heat they were cast into the water-casks until the water boiled. Then the hogs, as soon as they had been thoroughly bled, were thrust into the boiling water and, upon being withdrawn, were scraped clean of hair, and afterwards dressed for curing.

As the bonfire was lighted about four o'clock in the morning, while it was still dark, and as we boys were always permitted to get up in time to see it lighted, the occasion took upon itself in our eyes the character of a mad revel. Then, too, the farm hands who did the killing and dressing always gave us the tails of the hogs, and we roasted them in the coals of the bonfire. We devoured them without bread, and generally our impatience was such that we ate them half raw. But the *trichina spiralis* had never been heard of in that early time, and our half savage outdoor life had given us

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digestions fit to wrestle with worse enemies to health than underdone pig tails.

When Edward was nine years of age our father died. He approached the end slowly, knowing how inevitable it was. But with the calm mind of a brave man, he recognized the truth and set his house in order for the coming event. He was especially concerned for the health of his children. He had himself been frail from boyhood, and he was now about to die, while yet a young man in his thirties. He firmly believed that his impaired constitution and his early death were the consequences of excessive study and neglect of the outdoor life. To guard his children against a fate like his own, he carefully instructed our mother with reference to our bringing up. He enjoined her to guard us against overstudy and sedentary habits, and asked her particularly to see to it that, during boyhood's years, we should be sent to the country every summer to work on a farm for our board. So much of

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compensation he desired us to receive in order that our sense of justice might not be offended. But he desired that we should at no time be permitted to receive money wages, lest we acquire in youth that money loving spirit which he feared was to become the bane of our country.

These injunctions were carried out with the good-health results he had expected from them, so far as I was concerned. But Edward's health was weak from the first, and even the annual summer on a farm did not serve to repair the frailty of his constitution. Perhaps it saved him from an early decline, however, and certainly he enjoyed farm life and the light tasks exacted of us with quite all the zest that boys of this later time feel in their summer sports of a less useful kind.

The great dread in Edward's case was of pulmonary consumption, the malady of which our father had died. Throughout his boyhood Edward suffered with what I suppose

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to have been chronic bronchitis, though the doctors called it phthisic, which I take to be only another spelling of phthisis, or consumption. It was not, indeed, until after he had passed middle life that he completely threw off this trouble and ceased to feel apprehension for his lungs.

During the year after our father's death our mother let the farm, now greatly reduced in size, to a tenant, and removed with her four children to the house in Vevay in which Edward and I had been born. The schools there were much better than any that existed in the country. One of them, which Edward attended for a time, when his health permitted—and that was never for long at a time—was held in a long, one-storied, red brick school-house, that is still standing, though used now as a dwelling. The school was taught successively by several men, some of them students "working their way" through college. Another school, and a good one in its way, was kept

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by the Presbyterian minister and his wife, who in that way eked out the slender salary allowed them by the Home Missionary Society.

This gentleman, Mr. Hiram Wasson, was a New Englander, college bred, with some general culture, and possessed of the gift of making his pupils like him as well as respect him. He had a gentle, sunny nature, with a spice of pleasant humor in it, which he was not too dignified to employ in the school. His wife was a typical New England school teacher—a profession for which she had been trained—and she, too, had qualities that won the pupils.

The school was held in the Presbyterian church, of which Mr. Wasson was pastor. With the cleverness which all New England men are supposed to possess, Mr. Wasson fitted up the church for its double use, by hinging a narrow board to the back of each pew. These boards were provided with supports below, and when raised they served

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the purposes of desks. On Friday evening the supports were removed, the boards hung down the back of the pews, and the place was ready for use as a church.

Mr. Wasson never flogged. His nature was far too gentle for that brutality, and his ingenuity was quite equal to the task of maintaining discipline without resort to it. He invented a number of devices by which to punish when punishment was necessary. These devices were always good-natured, and usually there was a touch of humor in them, so that they amused and interested the school instead of offending its sentiment of justice.

It was in this school chiefly that Edward and I were taught during the two or three years of our stay in Vevay at that time. Something educationally much better was to come some years later, when, after an absence of considerable duration we returned to our native town, and fell under the wise government and instruction of a gifted

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woman, Mrs. Julia L. Dumont, a born educator, and the wisest one, man or woman, that I have ever known. She was, indeed, a Dr. Arnold in petticoats. Of her and her influence upon Edward's character and mind I shall write more fully in a later chapter. At the time with which this present chapter concerns itself, Edward Eggleston was still a little boy, acquiring only the rudiments of education. His health was so uncertain that his school attendance rarely, at any period of his boyhood, continued for more than a few weeks without interruption. But when too ill to go to school, he worked diligently at home, and a good deal more than kept up with his classes.

Vevay was in some respects a peculiar town, and life there was quite different in many ways, from life in Southern Indiana generally. The town lies on the bank of the Ohio river, about sixty or seventy miles below Cincinnati. It is built on a plain, or two plains rather, having different levels.

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The part nearest the river is subject to overflow at times of very high water, while the main part of the town, lying upon the higher plain near the hills, is not troubled in that way even at the times of the greatest freshets.

Vevay is framed in hills of considerable height and great beauty. In our boyhood these hills were clad from foot to crest in a dense growth of original beech forest. The trees have since been cut away in great part, unfortunately, but the town, which was attractive half a century ago, is now the most beautiful one I have anywhere seen in America.

Vevay was originally settled by a company of thrifty Swiss immigrants, near the beginning of the nineteenth century. These and their descendants gave to the place and the country immediately surrounding it, a character quite different from that of other small Ohio river villages. They were an energetic people for one thing, and for another they had brought with them from

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Switzerland a healthy disposition to enjoy life. They built stoutly and with a good deal of attention to the beauty of their homes and their surroundings, as well as to their convenience and comfort.

Whether in town or in the country their houses were as spacious as their means would permit them to build, and they were always made either of brick or of wood, stoutly framed. So far as I can learn not one of those people ever contented himself either with a log cabin or with a slightly built wooden house. Not one of them neglected to give what he could of tasteful ornamentation to his dwelling.

In the country these people always reserved a considerable space from agriculture for house grounds. In the town they sought spacious "lots," sometimes of half an acre or more, in which to build. These grounds they planted with fruit trees, grape vines, on ornamental arbors, flowering shrubs and beds of dainty flowers. These things

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and the climbing rose bushes and honeysuckles that were trained up the walls, quickly robbed a home place of its raw newness, while in the case of homes that had been established in the earlier days of the town, the aspect was as calmly reposeful as that of any old English manse. There was everywhere scrupulous cleanliness and exquisite neatness which extended to every detail of gardening, pruning and the like. The region had been an untouched wilderness when the Swiss settlers first went thither, about 1802. They made it literally "blossom like a rose."

They were a hardy race, too—long lived and life-enjoying in their comfortable, unpretentious ways. The fifth child born in that region after the Swiss settlement was made still survives at the age of ninety odd years. When Edward and I revisited the town, in the spring of 1900, we found her enjoying life like any youngster. She was known to everybody as "Aunt Lucy Detraz," and was

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always one of the most esteemed and best beloved women in the community. When Edward and I visited her for the last time we found her sitting bolt upright doing some exquisite needlework, without glasses to aid a vision which good health had preserved unimpaired. She greeted us cheerily, saying to us gray-haired veterans, in response to Edward's question whether she remembered us or not:

“Of course I remember you boys. I ought to, for I gave each of you the first bath you ever had after coming into this world, and dressed you in the first clothes you ever wore.”

The Swiss settlers chose the site of Vevay for their abiding place because of its real or fancied resemblance to their native region in Switzerland. They gave the town its Swiss name and, when Indiana became a State, they called their county Switzerland. Both names have survived.

But further than that, they sought to

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transplant to their home in the new world the industry they had pursued in the old. They cleared the rich plains, or "bottoms," as Western nomenclature has it, and planted them with vineyards. Thus, nearly half a century before Nicholas Longworth established the wine growing industry near Cincinnati, it was flourishing around Vevay, under the skilled hands of a people who had been born among the vines.

When Edward and I were boys the vine still constituted the principal crop of the Swiss and their descendants. Later came the great "temperance" wave, which not only discouraged the making, selling or drinking of any liquid that had alcohol in it, but presently brought the making of wine into something like actual disrepute. As this sentiment grew in intensity, one after another of the repute-loving Switzers yielded to it, destroying his vines and turning his attention to crops of other kinds.

As an illustration of the character of

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the people who constituted a considerable part of Vevay's population during Edward's boyhood, I may be permitted to relate here one incident of this transformation. Just below the town lived one of the most thrifty of the Swiss. His vineyards and orchards were extensive, and his house—a large brick structure, having one wing built expressly for use as a ball-room, stood in ample ornamental grounds. With him lived his old mother, one of the original Swiss born and Swiss bred settlers. The old lady protested stoutly against the destruction of the vineyards, saying that she had been born and reared among vineyards, as all her ancestors had been, and that she intended to die with the vines within sight. But the popular sentiment in condemnation of wine growing was becoming daily more intense. It was beginning to be the current opinion that wine growing was not a respectable pursuit, and that the wine grower belonged in one class with the keeper of a liquor shop. The

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son and master of the house smarted under such condemnation and was determined not to endure it longer. His old mother was much too feeble ever to leave the house, even for the purpose of taking a few steps on the ground. But she liked to sit at a window and look out upon the vineyards. The son, therefore, made a careful survey from every window of the house in order to learn precisely how much of the vine lands could be seen from each. That done, he destroyed all of the vineyards that lay beyond the range of the old lady's vision, preserving every vine that could in any way be seen from the house. Thenceforth he marketed as fruit the grapes borne by such vines as had been spared. He thus saved his reputation from the aspersions even of the most intemperate "temperance" propagandists, while tenderly sparing his old mother's feelings. She died in the belief that her whole life to its end had been passed in the midst of vineyards.

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By the time that Edward and I were old enough to know our surroundings, the Swiss people had ceased to be in a majority even in the town, while very few of them or their descendants lived more than a few miles away. Among our school fellows in Vevay the Swiss names Detraz, Grisard, Dufour, Dumont, Tardy, Courvoisseur, Danglade, Thiebaud (which was corrupted in its pronunciation into Kay-bo), Moreraud, Le Clerc, Malin, Golay, Bettens, Minnit, Violet, Duprez, Medary, Schenck, Girard and others of Swiss origin, abounded. But even in the town a large part of the small population of 1500 or 1800 was by that time of other than Swiss origin, while in the country generally, outside of Vevay, there were almost no people of Swiss extraction.

Southern Indiana, with its rich lands, and its easy access to markets by means of the river, in days when railroads had not begun to be, had been peculiarly attractive to settlers from every quarter. There were

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a number of Virginians there who, disliking slavery, had set their negroes free and were seeking to rebuild their fortunes in a new country which promised to grow rapidly. There were, in greater numbers, Kentuckians who, like our maternal grandfather, had crossed the river to aid in the winning of a new West, and had mightily thriven there. There were a good many Scotchmen, too, who, by their sturdy morality, speedily made themselves influential for good in the community. There were Pennsylvanians and a small sprinkling of New Englanders. Finally, there was a considerable number of people from North Carolina and elsewhere in the South, who had belonged to the "poor white" class.

These latter were always unthrifty, though they had virtues of their own. They drank too much whiskey when they could get it. They neglected their crops in order to go fishing and hunting, or frolicking at each other's houses. Very few of them

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manifested either disposition or capacity to improve their condition, even in a country which afforded abundant opportunity to every man. They were renters, nearly always, very few of them ever managing to become the owners of land, though fertile fields were to be had at small cost and on long credits. In hunting and fishing they were tirelessly energetic, but in work of a more profitable kind they were indolent and careless. They tilled their corn enough to make it yield half a crop perhaps—of which one-third went to pay the rent—but with that they were content. Any sort of shelter was good enough to satisfy their ideas of a home, and as for comforts in the house, they were too well used to the absence of such things to miss them or care for them.

But these people were perfectly honest, and except when in their cups, they were law-abiding. In anger and under stimulus of whiskey they sometimes, but rarely, committed crimes of violence, but meaner

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offences against the law were almost unknown among them. They were brave, and intensely pugnacious under provocation, but otherwise they were a kindly, good-natured folk, and generous to a fault when they had anything with which to be generous.

It was among a population thus diverse in origin that the Hoosier dialect had its origin. Its variations from correct speech were the conglomerate product of many varieties of ignorance. In a large degree they were the result of misdirected efforts to speak with more than ordinary accuracy. Uneducated persons who observed that their educated neighbors always said "get" and "yet" and "kettle" and the like instead of "git" and "yit" and "kittle," accepted the principle of pronunciation thus suggested, and misapplied it. In their anxiety to pronounce correctly, they said "led" for "lid," "set" for "sit," and so on through an entire class of words. In the same way, finding that the educated people around them never

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spoke of a "nuss," but said "nurse" instead, the illiterate adopted the practice of saying "furse" when they meant "fuss."

When "The Hoosier Schoolmaster" was in press for publication in book form, its author had it in mind to print with it as a preface, a somewhat extensive study of this dialect. He wrote for that purpose an essay of rare scholarship and abundant interest, and after it was in type, he abandoned his purpose and suppressed what he had written on the subject. His reason for doing so did not seem to me at the time to be adequate, nor does it seem so now. It is set forth as follows in the brief preface which was actually printed:

"It has been in my mind to append some remarks, philological and otherwise, upon the dialect, but Professor Lowell's admirable and erudite preface to the Biglow Papers must be the despair of every one who aspires to write on Americanisms. To Mr. Lowell belongs the distinction of being the

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only one of our most eminent authors, and the only one of our most eminent scholars who has given careful attention to American dialects. But while I have not ventured to discuss the provincialisms of the Indiana backwoods, I have been careful to preserve the true *usus loquendi* of each locution, and I trust my little story may afford material for some one better qualified than I to criticise the dialect."

That hope has never been fulfilled. No scholar has yet undertaken the philological task suggested. But "The Hoosier Schoolmaster" has exercised a still more valuable influence upon American letters. It has been the direct inspiration of the many recent Indiana writers who, in prose and verse, have created a Hoosier literature of enduring worth. Indeed, it is scarcely too much to claim for that pioneer work that it gave a broader impulse than even that, that it set the example of utilizing local conditions, and depicting provincial character, in ways

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that are now common to the writers of fiction in every quarter of the country. Before "The Hoosier Schoolmaster" appeared, only Bret Harte had in any considerable degree departed in that direction from the beaten paths of prose fiction, and his work had to do with phenomenal social conditions, the result of accident, as it were, and quite radically different from those that existed in other parts of the country, and that the success of "The Hoosier Schoolmaster" first taught our novelists to use as material.

It should be explained that the dialect and the manners that were associated with it, were found chiefly in the remoter country districts. But some traces of them were discoverable even among those well-to-do farmers and landowners whose thrift and ambition, even as early as the forties, had dotted the region along the Ohio river with spacious brick dwellings—most of them with stately colonnaded porticoes in front and ornamented lawns surrounding them. Association always

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does that much for a dialect. Henry Ward Beecher never cured himself of the provincial New England pronunciation of "new" and "dew," and of "house," "cow," and the like. It has taken the efforts of three generations of highly cultured school teachers in New England to root out the slighter provincialisms of speech which even the educated classes there had adopted in childhood from the less cultivated and more numerous class.

CHAPTER V.

In the Real Backwoods.



ABOUT the year 1850 Edward and I were brought into closer contact with the backwoods life of Southern Indiana than ever before, and his recollection of things observed at that time furnished no small part of his materials when in later years he came to the task of writing "The Hoosier Schoolmaster" and "The End of the World."

In Decatur county there lived Captain William Lowry, our mother's uncle. He was a veteran of the war of 1812, and as a young man he had "located" a large tract of government land in that region, becoming its owner by virtue of the land warrant given to him by the government in reward of his military service. To this domain he had made large additions by pur-

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chasing the land warrants of other discharged volunteers. He thus became the largest landowner, and in the end the most prosperous man in all that region.

When he settled there about 1818 he had no white man for neighbor within twenty miles of him. Indians were all about, but the pioneer knew how to deal with them in peace-procuring ways. Literal wolves often howled at his house by night, but the energetic pioneer and soldier never at any time confronted the metaphorical "wolf at the door." He conquered his worst enemy when he cleared the dense forests from such lands as he meant to convert into fields, and from the beginning he relied upon himself for the satisfaction of all his own and his family's needs. As the region settled somewhat, he became its most influential citizen, the one to whom every one in misfortune appealed for counsel and assistance, the one whose word went furthest in the decision of all questions of local public concern.



EDWARD EGGLESTON IN 1857

I n t h e R e a l B a c k w o o d s

His family grew rapidly, as it was the custom of families in that time and country to do. But under the primitive way of living then practiced, the multiplication of children was a help rather than a hindrance to prosperity.

And Captain William Lowry never departed from that primitive way of living. To the end of his days he and his boys and girls produced for themselves everything that they needed to eat, drink and wear, with the exception of salt, coffee, tea, and, toward the end, a calico gown now and then as a bit of finery for the women folk. On the farm itself the cotton and wool needed for clothing were grown, carded, spun, woven and fashioned into garments. The blankets on the beds, as well as the quilts and sheets and pillow-cases—these latter made always of home-grown linen—were produced in like manner. The “sugar camp”—a vast grove of sugar maple trees—yielded all the sugar and molasses used on the

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place. From the orchards came, besides a great store of apples, an abundance of cider and vinegar, apple butter, peach butter, dried fruits, and a product which I have never seen or heard of elsewhere, but which I regarded as a rare delicacy in my boyhood, namely cider molasses. The dairy yielded milk, cream, cheese and butter in lavish abundance. The poultry yards produced more than the home demand called for, but the surplus was never sold. Much of it was given away in my time to less fortunate folk who, either by reason of the poverty of unthrift, or because of their misfortune in living in the village near by, were unable to supply themselves with such things. Beef, pork, bacon and mutton were all products of the farm. The grain was ground in near-by water mills, the miller taking toll for grinding it.

I think in all his life this "uncle Will" of ours never had a servant or a hired helper of any kind in his house. All the work of the household was done by the members of

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the family working together in willing co-operation, making something of a frolic out of much of the work, and not one of them ever having work enough to do to bring weariness as its reward.

The house was a generously hospitable one. There was rarely a time when there were not some of the numerous relatives staying there, as all of them so loved to do, and the place was a kind of Mecca to them all. Strangers were entertained, too, whenever their paths led them into that region, but no presence, whether of visiting kinsfolk, or of passing strangers, was ever suffered to make the smallest difference in the family life. Whether there were many guests or none in the house there was always an abundantly laden table and beds in plenty. There was singing in the evening, and, if the weather was cold, there was always a gathering of children, and often of young men and maidens, around the great wood fires where nuts were cracked and apples

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roasted, while one or more of the girls played a merrily humming accompaniment on her spinning wheel. Some of the girls liked spinning—some did not. Those who liked it did it; those that did not, let it alone. That was the spirit in which all things were done in the house and on the farm.

Something—I know not what—induced our mother, about 1850, to close our home in Vevay and send Edward and me to this pioneer home to live for a year or more. Edward remained on the farm for only a brief time, after which he went to the neighboring village of Milford, or Clifty, in order that he might “clerk” in a store there and pursue his studies under tuition of a young man in the store who had had some educational advantages. But as the village lay only about a mile away, Edward was often at the farm, and saw much of its peculiar and interesting life. He saw much else, too, during that year, which he afterwards turned to literary account.

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At the time of our stay there, Decatur county was completely and typically a "back woods" region. Only a small part of the scattered population had attended even such schools as existed in the country districts of Southern Indiana. Only here and there—chiefly in Greensburg, the county seat,—was there a young man who had spent a year in boarding school. The majority of the men and women in that primitive and sparsely settled country were illiterate, or very nearly so, not so much by any fault of their own as because they had lacked opportunity. The only school-house I can now remember in all the region round about, was one which our great-uncle, Captain Lowry, had built on the outskirts of his own farm, to be used rent free by any wandering schoolmaster who might succeed in securing "scholars" enough to justify him in keeping school. This happened only occasionally. It happened once during our year in Decatur county. At that time a man named Higgins opened

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a pay school there, and taught it for three months. He eked out the meagre income derived from the school by teaching a singing school every Saturday afternoon and Sunday morning.

There was an abundance of volume in his voice, I remember, but his only knowledge of music consisted of an ability to sing by "numeral notes," a system then much in vogue in the remoter parts of the country. Instead of a musical scale, there were two parallel lines between which numbers were printed. One stood for *do*, two for *re*, three for *mi*, four for *fah*, and so on to eight, which stood for *do* again. If a numeral was printed above or below the parallel lines it indicated that it was to be sung an octave above or below. Instead of soprano, bass, alto and tenor, the four parts were tenor, treble, counter and bass, the word tenor signifying the "air" of the tune, to be sung by soprano voices. That use of the word was logical and etymological at any rate.

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The singing school was maintained by subscription—just as more pretentious operas and concerts are at present. And like our opera, its sessions constituted important social functions. All the young men of the neighborhood subscribed the price fixed upon. The young women were deemed to contribute their sufficient share merely by gracing the sessions with their presence. The little boys and girls also came without charge.

The singing school was in many ways a minister to culture of the backwoods kind, to social intercourse and to courtship and marriage. Young men in that region never escorted young women to singing school or to church; but when the exercises in either case were at an end, every young man who could screw his courage up “to the sticking point,” would mount his horse, ride up to the side of the damsel he wished to cultivate, and stammeringly ask her “May I see you safe home?”

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There was good reason for trepidation, indeed. For the "eternal feminine" was as strongly self-assertive in those young women of the backwoods as it is in any belle of our day, while their disposition to assert themselves in rather free and easy ways was not curbed by any excessive regard for the nicer courtesies of life. If a young man's attentions were unwelcome to the girl chosen for their object, or if the girl happened to be pretty and inclined to coquetry, she was apt to bring a rude and well worn wit to bear for his discomfiture. When, in the conventional phrase, he asked "May I see you safe home?" she would answer "Yes, if you'll ride on ahead and sit on our front fence till I get there." There were other formulæ sometimes used on either side, but the one given will serve as a sufficient example.

For the most part the girls graciously accepted the proffered escort, unless the man offering it happened to be especially dis-

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agreeable, or unless, by superior promptitude, his offer of escort had anticipated that of some other and more favored youth, upon whose present coming the girl counted with hope and confidence.

Even in this unvarnished society there were well understood conventions governing social intercourse. Upon arriving at her home the girl's behavior toward her escort very nicely marked the extent of her favor, or the lack of it. If she thanked him for his attention, and dismissed him with a prompt "good-day," it meant that he had had his trouble for his pains, or something like that. If she were a trifle more gracious, and bade him call again, it signified that she liked him well enough, but was, as yet, at least a trifle indifferent to any attractions he might possess. If she invited him to "have dinner with us," the fact involved at least so much of "encouragement" as might justify him in further attempts to win her favor. Of course, the tone and manner in each case

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modified the general significance of the words, as they always do when maidens are at the age of choosing and are dealing with possible or probable suitors. Such things "come by nature" to women of the backwoods as surely as to women of the drawing-room.

The sturdy virtues of manliness, honesty and industry among men, and a proud self-respect among women, were strongly marked in this typically western, backwoods community. But many petty superstitions survived among them, and even the more intelligent of them were credulous in strange ways. The scientific habit of mind was completely lacking. The weather warnings of patent medicine almanacs were accepted as confidently as the advertised nostrums themselves were taken, in spite of the frequent failure of both. Young women swallowed chickens' hearts whole with incantations that were believed to smooth the pathway of true love. Such physicians as lived

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in those parts found annoyingly successful rivals in practice in the persons of ignorant old crones,—such as Edward described in Granny Sanders,—whose simples, gathered at the right time of the moon, were firmly believed to work well-nigh miraculous cures. Still more confident was the popular faith in the pretensions of certain claimants to occult powers. I remember hearing a weird and awe-inspiring tale of the success of one of these in curing disease without so much as seeing his patient. The story was told to me in the dense forest, during a 'coon hunt at midnight. It was related that some man in chopping wood had split his own foot nearly in two; that after hours of effort, the physician who had been called in declared that he could in no way stop the hemorrhage, and that the man must bleed to death; that thereupon a messenger was sent at midnight to wake the occult healer and invoke his assistance; that the man of mysterious powers, without rising from his bed, had

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bidden the messenger return, for that the bleeding was now stopped; and finally, that it did cease at precisely the time of the healer's declaration of the fact.

Let us not laugh too derisively over the credulity of a simple, unlearned people as illustrated in this story. Let us reflect that even in our highly scientific time, in our most advanced communities, there are scores of thousands of educated men and women who not only believe in healings equally absurd, but are almost belligerent in their assertion of their faith, and quite lavish in their gifts of money for the building of marble temples in which to teach and propagate their doctrine of "absent treatment" by faith alone. A foolish credulity seems quite as prevalent among the educated people of an enlightened time as among those who lacked the knowledge and the intellectual training which are supposed to eradicate such credulity from the mind. Superstition is, perhaps, a matter of mental constitution rather than of mental

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condition as affected by education. Years after he had finished his work of portraying the rude ignorance of the Hoosiers, Edward Eggleston wrote "The Faith Doctor," to show forth the worse credulity of men and women who had not the Hoosiers' plea of ignorance to excuse their weakness of mind.

In this interior county the Hoosier dialect was far more generally employed than in the regions along the Ohio river. In the river counties there was a considerable number of educated families in which the speech of the children was jealously guarded against contamination. In Decatur there were no such families, the best educated people there—except for a doctor here and there, and possibly a preacher or two—were such as had received nothing more than the training of the country schools, supplemented in a very few cases by a year or less in some country boarding school.

The people were all Americans—nearly all Hoosiers by birth. The few who, like

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Captain Lowry, had been born in Kentucky, had lived so long in Indiana as to be in no marked way unlike their Hoosier-born neighbors in manner and speech. There were no foreigners there, and no persons of immediate descent from foreigners, to influence the dialect. There was, indeed, no modifying influence of any kind to serve as a corrective. The schoolmaster, Higgins, already mentioned, made some effort in that direction, but it was badly misguided. He taught us to give full orthoëpic force to the "w" in "sword," and the "t" in "often" and "soften," to pronounce the word "only" with a short "o," and "Niagara" as if it had been spelled "Née-ogg-ara." The Yankee schoolmistress, with her trained intelligence, was bravely combating the dialect and the ignorance, of which it was a symptom, in the river towns. But she had not yet appeared in the interior.

In such homes as that of Captain Lowry it was the custom to subscribe for one or

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two weekly story papers. The favorites were the *Cincinnati Dollar Times*, the *Saturday Evening Post* of Philadelphia, and the *Flag of Our Union*, published in Boston. The serials and short stories published in these periodicals were of no particular value, but they were at any rate quite harmless, and they were entertaining to simple minds. It was the practice to have them read aloud by the evening fireside, after which the papers containing them were loaned to such of the neighbors as could read them but were too poor to subscribe.

There was no library of any kind anywhere in all that region, and I cannot remember that, during our stay of a year in Decatur county, I ever saw in any house a book, other than school text books, with the exception of a paper-bound temperance novel by T. S. Arthur.

The only educative influence that was brought to bear was that of the preachers, chiefly Methodists. It would be difficult to

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exaggerate the service to civilization rendered by the itinerant circuit riders of that peculiarly militant church, at a time when, to quote from "The Hoosier Schoolmaster," the West "bade fair to become a perdition as bad as any that Brother Sodom ever depicted."

These traveling Methodist preachers were, in many cases, men of scanty education, but they knew by heart the message they were charged to deliver, and they were mightily in earnest. Their speech might be ungrammatical at times, but their zeal was white hot with the fervor of conviction, and their eloquence lost nothing of effectiveness by reason of the rudeness of their rhetoric or the inaccuracy of their diction. Each of those men firmly believed that he had been called of God to this service, and each felt as the Apostle did—"Woe is me if I preach not the gospel."

The itinerant system, too, was peculiarly well adapted to the time and country. It

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effectually prevented the Methodist preachers from forming local ties of any kind or creating local prejudices that might impair their effectiveness. It, and the poverty which accompanied it, kept them foot-loose of all worldly things, and made of their ministry the one concern of their lives. Their work was essentially missionary in character, and its effectiveness was as pronounced as had been that of the Jesuit missionaries, of an earlier time, among the Indians and half-breeds.

The theology of these men was often harsh, and it was always rude and literal in its interpretations, but it was such as the people to whom they preached could understand and accept. They believed in the literal inspiration of the Scriptures, and they interpreted the Bible, in its English version, which alone they knew, with absolute confidence that every word was true, and that every word meant precisely what it appeared to mean. They believed in an actual hell,

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of fire and brimstone, and they preached that doctrine as a truth which could not be doubted, and need not be argued. God had said it, and there was an end of discussion. They believed in a personal devil, and in his constant presence at every elbow as the tempter to sin.

The effect of the preaching of these earnest men as a morally educative force in a rude and ignorant community, was of necessity very great. Even when it influenced men's minds chiefly through fear, it prompted them to good conduct as one of the necessary means of keeping out of an eternal hell of quenchless fire.

But the preachers were educators in other ways. They were themselves better educated than men in that community generally were, for though many of them began their work with exceedingly meagre schooling behind it, they were subject, as preachers, to the ceaseless and perfectly fearless admonition of older ministers, and especially of

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their "Presiding Elders," whose duty it was to give minute attention to the conduct, methods and training of the ministers under their jurisdiction. Their admonitory supervision was supported by adequate ecclesiastical authority, and their advice was accepted as a command.

Sometimes ludicrous results occurred. I remember one case related in my presence by an old Presiding Elder. He said that upon one occasion, when going down the Ohio river on a steamboat, he had for companion a youthful minister whose bringing up had been of the rudest kind. The two were assigned to a single stateroom, and the Presiding Elder, observing in the young man a regrettable neglect of personal cleanliness, gently reproved him. Among other things he told the uncouth youth that he should brush his teeth every morning. The young man meekly accepted the chiding as a godly admonition, and in the morning when the two arose, he said to his mentor, "I'm going to

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begin at once, and this morning I have used your tooth-brush. When we go ashore I'll buy one for myself."

"No," answered the older man, scarcely able to suppress a laugh, "you may spare yourself that expense. In recognition of your effort to profit by my suggestions, I'll make you a present of that tooth-brush."

The Presiding Elders gave attention also to the studies of the younger men, for certain studies were marked out for them by ecclesiastical authority, with a view to the repair of their educational deficiencies. Chief among these studies was English grammar, through the diligent study of which it was hoped that every young minister would presently learn to use a better English than that which he had learned from association. This result was not always realized. I well remember that one able and even eloquent preacher, past middle life, and sufficiently prominent to be assigned successively to the charge of the best churches in the larger

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towns, always said that "John the Baptist had went out into the wilderness."

One who had served long as Presiding Elder, used to tell of a minister who, when called to account for his persistently ungrammatical speech, tearfully expressed regret, and added: "Brethren, I can't help it. For years I have carried a grammar in my hat, but for the life of me I can't get it into my head."

Notwithstanding these 'occasional failures of the system, the young preachers generally improved rapidly under this educational system, so that as a rule the pulpit was an exemplar of a much better rhetorical usage than any that the people heard elsewhere; more important still, these preachers were expected to read the weekly denominational newspapers, together with a book now and then, so that their intellectual field of vision became somewhat larger than that of the majority of the people to whom they preached.

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At the time of Edward Eggleston's stay in Decatur county, there survived in that region a band of outlaws, with whose doings Edward became acquainted through the arrest and trial of some of them. In earlier days it had been the practice of these men to follow travelers on the highway, and rob and sometimes kill them in secluded places along the road. In aid of their nefarious business, they leagued with themselves a number of roadside innkeepers. Soon after the luckless traveler established himself at an inn, two or three of the gang, pretending to be strangers in those parts, would ride up and ask accommodations for the night. That done, the robbery was easily managed, and the victim, stripped of every valuable possession, including his horse, was left to pursue his journey penniless and on foot.

Popular indignation over such occurrences led to a lynching or two, and the bolder operations of the gang were brought

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to an end. The former highwaymen degenerated into burglars and petty thieves. But during Edward Eggleston's stay in Milford, or Clifty, as the little village in Decatur county was variously called, the band was reorganized for predatory purposes, by a man of considerable education, great shrewdness and, to all appearance, conspicuously blameless life. Its headquarters in the older highway robbery times had been in the adjoining county of Ripley. But the new master of the organization lived at Clifty, and, under his directions, its operations were carried on mainly in Decatur county.

The secret organization was at last discovered and broken up. Some of its members, unable to give bail, were tried, convicted and sent to the penitentiary. Some failed of conviction for lack of sufficient evidence. These were forced to leave the county and the State under threats of lynching. The highly moral leader of the gang gave bail, forfeited it and disappeared. He

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was the original of Dr. Small in "The Hoosier Schoolmaster."

Edward was only a boy at the time of the discovery of this gang, and the shock of this revelation of depravity on the part of men whom he had been accustomed to see in the guise of good citizens, so afflicted his sensitive mind that for a time he fell ill. It was altogether natural that, when he came to write his first novel of Hoosier life, he should draw upon this memory of his boyhood for the materials of his plot.

It was during that year, in the real backwoods, too, that he made his most fruitful observations of Hoosier life, Hoosier character and the Hoosier dialect. For there, for the first and only time in his life, he encountered these things in their purity, unmixed with anything higher or better. He learned to know how much of human goodness, how much of manly and womanly virtue there may be among people of homely appearance, uncouth manners and rude speech.

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He here saw human nature undisguised by the artificialities of culture, and learned to respect it and love it for what it is, rather than for anything it pretends to be.

How valuable all this was to him as a preparation for the work he was destined to do in life, will be best seen by the reader who realizes the unity of that work. In his novels of the Hoosier life, and the early life of Minnesota, Edward Eggleston was minutely depicting certain phases of that "Life in the United States" which in later years he chose as his special field of historical research and historical writing. In those later novels, whose scenes were in other fields, he was inspired by a like purpose to show forth phases of American life which had come under his close personal observation. In his novels quite as truly as in "The Beginners of a Nation" and "The Transit of Civilization," he was writing history of that kind which most strongly appealed to his mind—history which concerns

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itself far less with public events than with the life forces, the manners, circumstances, influences and ways of thinking among the people, out of which not only public events but institutions themselves have grown. In his view every detail of the popular life and thought was of importance, every circumstance that had influenced men's lives and men's minds was worth recording. These things he held to be the seeds of history, and in all his work, whether fiction or formal history, it was his endeavor to study these seeds, to recall their sprouting, and to discover in their growth the origin of the institutions, the habits, the customs, the life of our later time.

This thought is not mine but his, though I present it with less of reserve than his modesty exacted of him when he first communicated it to me.

This he did in a letter written to me from Europe early in 1880. In it he told me that he purposed to devote the next ten



CLIFTY FALLS, NEAR MADISON, INDIANA
A favorite haunt of Edward Eggleston

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years of his life to the writing of a series of books which together should constitute a "History of Life in the United States."

In that letter concerning his plans and purposes, he said something like this to me :


"After all this work will not differ in essentials from what I have been doing hitherto. The historical form is more ambitious—or perhaps you will say more pretentious—but, as I look back over my work in fiction, I begin to see clearly that every chapter of it was inspired by the same purpose that actuates me now. My interest in my work has been that of a student intent upon tracing the forces of life in America to their origins, and showing how men and women lived and thought and felt, under conditions that existed before those of to-day came into being. So that I am not making a new departure now or entering a new field. I have been writing history all the time in my novels. I am going now to write the same kind of history, in a somewhat different form."

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I cannot offer the foregoing passage as a quotation. But the facts recorded in it deeply impressed me at the time, and I am certain that my paraphrase of the words is substantially accurate, though made only from memory. The thought that underlies them seems to me a fruitful one, helpful to every reader who would justly understand the purpose of a life work that has gained for its author a high place in the esteem and affection of his fellow men.

CHAPTER VI.

The Environment of the Hoosier Boy.

URING our year in Decatur county our mother was married to the Rev. Williamson Terrell, a Methodist minister of ability and some culture. After a few months Edward and I were summoned to our new home in New Albany, where Mr. Terrell was pastor of the principal church.

Edward's health was now so much strengthened by his year of backwoods life that he resumed his studies in a rather pretentious but fairly good "Collegiate Institute," presided over by one Ayer or Ayres. The boy had acquired a speaking acquaintance with French while living as a child among the Swiss in Vevay. This language he took up again at the Collegiate Institute, and there he began the study of Latin and

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algebra and geometry, having completed his mastery of arithmetic under tuition of the young store-clerk at Clifty.

As usual his ambition and his almost preternatural energy in study outran his strength and quickly exhausted it. He quitted school after a month or two, but in that time he had learned enough of Latin to read Cæsar, and as soon as the first severity of his illness was past he returned to his studies, with only himself for his master. Almost all his education was got in that way, indeed. He rarely attended any school for more than a few weeks, or a few months at most, before falling ill. But except while the attack of illness was at its worst, he never ceased to study.

When he could no longer attend school, and when a wise exercise of parental authority imposed certain sharp limitations upon his hours of self-imposed study, he joined with me in a number of boyish occupations of a time-killing character. I was at that

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period of my life neither disposed nor accustomed to waste the hours out of school in the drudgery of study. I had a faculty of quick perception and a positively glutinous memory, so that half an hour's work over my books each evening was quite all I needed to enable me to maintain a good standing in my classes. Had I been ambitious of distinction in school another half hour of study each evening would easily have placed and kept me at the very head of all my classes. I was content, however, with a place in the upper half of them, and I gave all the rest of the hours out of school, and the whole of every Saturday, to recreation. In company with a chum of mine, I moulded and burnt miniature bricks—each bearing the initials of the two young manufacturers, in relief, upon its surface. Edward would have nothing to do with this “mud-pie making” as he called it; but when Charley Van Dusen and I advanced a step, and, from being brick-makers, became architects and builders, Ed-

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ward interested himself in our work, helping us to construct Greek and Roman temples out of our little bricks, and incidentally teaching us something of the achievements of the ancients in art and architecture. He related to us also, pretty nearly all he knew of classical mythology, adopting a method which I remember was puzzling and painful to my more prosaic mind. Thus, when we would wander on a Saturday out among the "knobs," as the hills near New Albany were called, Edward would sit down in the woods, by a waterfall, and say to me something like this:

"We are in a spirit-haunted woodland now; let me tell you about it. The reason that waterfall is so beautiful is that a water nymph lives there and controls every drop of the water. When we mortals are here she allows nothing to be seen except what we see now; but when there are no mortals about, she gathers around her the wood sprites, and exhibits to them glories that are too

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great and too sacred for human eyes to look upon." Then he would go on relating some Greek legend, making it local and telling it not as legend but as fact known to him. In my boyish literalness, I remember, his words puzzled me greatly. I could not believe that Edward was lying, though my fear that he was doing so, was strengthened by a complete and constitutional disbelief in the occult, the supernatural and the mystical. That incredulity had been fostered in my mind by the teachings of my father and my mother, who, in fear that we should imbibe superstition from the ignorance about us, had taken pains from our very infancy to guard against such influences. Ghost stories had always been forbidden in our nursery, and even fairy stories were permitted only when accompanied by an explanation of their character. So when Edward localized his Greek legends and placed them in modern settings of scene and circumstance, I was grievously puzzled by a conflict between un-

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belief in the supernatural on the one hand, and my profound faith in Edward's truthfulness on the other. After several repetitions of this experience, I made up my mind that in telling these stories Edward was lying, and I was mightily troubled by a fear that he would be damned for doing so.

In later years Edward was fond of relating an experience of his own and mine encountered at this time—an experience which gave us our first lesson in commercial morality as it is sometimes practiced.

Among other things that we did at that period, was the manufacture of mussel-shell lime. We hit upon this by accident, and at first sought only a domestic use for our product. It was a nearly impalpable powder, and we found it to be a superior metal polish.

One day Edward was seized with the thought that we might make a little pocket money—a rare thing with us—out of our discovery by putting it on the market. To

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that end he consulted a certain peripatetic scissors-grinder who was accustomed to pass our way once or twice a week. He showed him experimentally how, by a little rubbing with our shell lime, a knife or pair of scissors could be made to "look like new," and asked for the scissors-grinder's advice as to means by which to market our product. Edward was shrewd enough to withhold from the man all information as to our processes of manufacture, but at that point unhappily his sagacity ceased.

The scissors-grinder eagerly offered to become our agent.

"You boys furnish me the stuff," he said, "and I'll sell it. I can put it into every house in town. But what shall we call it? We must have a good name for it. That means a lot."

So Edward began cudgeling his brains for a name. Finally, as he looked across the street, his eye caught sight of some Venetian window blinds, which had been newly painted

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of an intenser and grassier green than was usual, and he suggested that we should call our powder "Venetian Polish." To this suggestion the scissors-grinder added another. "A thing ought to be called French," he said, "if you're going to sell it. Let's call it 'French Venetian Polish.'"

Edward's conscience was not geographical in its tendencies, and so the suggestion was accepted. He and I made a considerable quantity of the "French Venetian Polish," packed it in pasteboard boxes of our own manufacture, and delivered it to the scissors-grinder for sale on commission. He sold it readily enough on its merits, but he not only pocketed the total proceeds of the sales, but managed to discover what the "French Venetian Polish" was made of and how it was made. After that he made it for himself, and the only good thing we two boys got out of our discovery was experience.

After six months or so of our resi-

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dence in New Albany, Mr. Terrell's pastorate came to the end appointed for it under the itinerant system, and he was transferred to the charge of Wesley Chapel, in Madison, to which city the family removed.

As illustrative of the life and thought of that time, I may explain that an assignment to the pastorate of Wesley Chapel was a matter of some perplexity to the ecclesiastical authorities. Wesley Chapel was the most fashionable Methodist church, in the wealthiest and most fashionable city in all Southern Indiana. The church, though calling itself a chapel, was suspected, if not of popish inclinations, at least of a tendency toward Episcopalian formalism. Wesley Chapel had set up a choir, not to monopolize the singing, but to lead and guide it, and the fact was regarded with grave doubt as an innovation of very dangerous tendency. Although the appointment to the pastorate of Wesley Chapel was justly regarded as financially, socially and in other ways the

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very best within the gift of the bishop who presided over that Conference, there were not many ministers willing to accept it, and still fewer to whom the bishop was willing to entrust it. As the congregation was composed of some of the best educated people in the little city, the clergyman assigned to its pastorate must be a man of ability and intellectual attainments. As the church insisted upon maintaining a choir, and was suspected of a strong though still dormant longing for an organ, there were many of the ministers who felt conscientious scruples of a very grave nature about accepting a pastorate which might seem at least to commit them to tolerance, if not to approval of such ritualistic departures from the simplicity of Methodist doctrine and practice. On the other hand, there were some ministers in the Conference who would have been pleased to be assigned to Wesley Chapel, in order that they might use all they had of ecclesiastical authority and pastoral influence

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for the suppression of the choir and the restoration of Methodist simplicity within that erring church. These wanted to "make a row," and the wise bishops did not want a "row."

In our more enlightened time it is difficult to understand the intellectual attitude of half a century ago, upon matters of this kind. But no history of that time would be even approximately complete if it did not include some attempt, at least, to illustrate this point.

Roman Catholics were at that time both feared and hated. They were accounted idolators and worshipers of graven images, and whatever in the remotest degree savored of Roman Catholic practice was looked upon as a thing of devilish inspiration. I remember that I once suffered a period of enforced and rather severe penance for the grave offence of having strayed into a Catholic church one week-day afternoon, to hear the vesper music. And I remember hearing one

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dear old lady publicly censured for having expressed the belief that some, at least, of the Roman Catholics might be admitted to heaven. The preacher who censured her—a Baptist, I think he was—explained the matter very logically, and with all the narrowness and intolerance that logic chopping usually breeds in half-instructed minds. He began by saying that idolatry was, of course, a sin quite unpardonable of God, if not renounced and repented of; that Roman Catholics were clearly idolators; that they must therefore, of necessity, be damned unless they repented and became Protestants; and that in expressing the hope that some of them might be saved through the tender mercies of God, the gentle-spirited old lady had been disloyal to the very fundamentals of faith, and had lent her countenance to the heathen practice of worshiping idols.

There was one Episcopal church in Madison. The other Protestant churches regarded it as merely a slightly modified form

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of the Roman Catholic communion. It had stained glass windows. It had an allegorical painting on the window over the altar. It had a pipe organ. Its rector read the service in a white gown and preached in a black one. Worse than all, that church had a gilded cross surmounting its steeple. Was not the cross a sign and symbol of Roman Catholicism? Was it not, in fact, one of the "graven images" which Roman Catholic idolators wickedly worshiped? Were not Methodist girls, and girls of Baptist and Presbyterian families strictly forbidden to use the cross as an ornament when they manufactured for themselves out of crushed rose petals, a chain of beads?

I suppose that at that time there was not in all the land, and I am certain there was not in Southern Indiana, a single Methodist church which would have permitted the playing of any musical instrument at its services, or the use of the cross in the church, or on the person of any of its con-

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gregation. That which is properly the universal symbol of Christianity, and is now everywhere recognized as such, was then held to be a Roman Catholic device for the betrayal of human souls into the devil's possession.

And the narrowness of mind which prompted such views, and which excluded everything of ornament from the architecture and the furnishing of churches, and every ministry of taste and beauty from their services, went much further than this in its pestilent and nagging interference. I remember with what bitterness the clergyman under whose ministrations we sat in our early boyhood, denounced the "putting on of gold and costly apparel," even exhorting wives and widows to strip off their wedding rings, as "shackles that would bind them to the devil," to quote the phrase I remember hearing that fervent preacher use in a burst of excited eloquence on this theme. I remember, too, with what destructive oratorical

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onslaughts the preachers used to denounce the sinful wearing of "artificial"—by which they meant artificial flowers—in women's bonnets. In one case a middle-aged and most sedate widow, who was growing thin of visage under the burden of caring for a family on an all too meagre income, was rather cruelly called to account in the presence of the congregation for having filled out the hollow sides of her poke bonnet with a little white and black ruching. She had done so, she explained, merely to hide the increasing hollowness of her cheeks, and to that plea the preacher replied that in trying to do that she had been guilty of the sin of wilful deception.

In Madison, and in other places at the time of our removal to Madison, the rigid puritanism that we had known before had been somewhat softened by increasing culture, but in many ways it still reigned and ruled with the strong hand. Sabbatarianism especially was rampant and very exigent in

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its demands, particularly among the Methodists. It was held to be sinful to take a bath on Sunday, or to shave, or to brush one's shoes on that day. To buy or sell the very simplest thing on Sunday was rigorously forbidden. No cooking of any kind was permitted—all that must be done on Saturday—and cold meals alone were permitted on what we were taught to regard as the Sabbath.

As a healthy and very active boy I fell into the habit, during one glorious June in Vevay, of walking out into "God's first temples," the woodlands, during the scant intervals between religious services. At this the "preacher in charge" was gravely disturbed. He made it the occasion of a pastoral visit to my mother, at that time a widow, trying to bring up her children in the "nurture and admonition of the Lord." After that I was forbidden to indulge my sinful love of nature and compelled to pass my Sunday afternoons in pretending to read "Smiley on Class

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Meetings," "Baxter's Saints' Rest," and somebody's "Plan of Salvation." I say "pretending to read" these books, for my sense of justice was deeply wounded by the requirement, and finding myself helpless to resist it in any other way, I deliberately cheated it. Thus I was saved from the sin of breathing the Sunday air in the glorious forest, and induced to practice a pious deception instead.

My helpless little soul was often thus in blind revolt against teachings that I could neither understand nor reconcile with the little I possessed of reason. Thus, when the Vevay boys went in swimming on Sunday and one of them was drowned, it was explained by our preacher that the poor fellow's death—undoubtedly followed by his damnation—was decreed by the Almighty as a just punishment of his sin. This declaration sorely puzzled my mind. I asked myself why—if going in swimming on Sunday was a sin deserving death—the other boys

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in the party were not punished in like manner. Carrying this thought a little further, I argued that, if the results were to be taken as an indication of the Divine view of the matter, the weight of the evidence was overwhelmingly in favor of swimming on Sunday; for only one of the ten boys had been drowned, while the other nine had received proof of God's approval by being permitted to enjoy their bath without any punishment or any ill consequences whatever. Thus, it seemed to me, the Divine verdict was nine to one in favor of the innocence of Sunday bathing in the river. I firmly believed, of course, in the direct supervision of human affairs by Providence, and so I could not doubt that this poor fellow's drowning was decreed as a punishment for something, but in view of the escape of the other nine boys, I could not think that he was thus terribly and irretrievably punished for an offence which brought no punishment at all to his comrades. He

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must have committed some other sin, I argued.

Puzzled to the point of bewilderment, I dared not suggest my doubts to any grown person. I knew that such a course would bring to me not enlightenment or explanation, but a terrible rebuke, with some species of penance added for the purification of my soul. So I spoke only to Edward on the subject. He was about eleven or twelve years old at the time, but my faith in his wisdom was boundless. No counsel—not even that of the preacher—could have meant so much to me as his words always did.

I laid the case before him, therefore, to his profound grief and sorrow. He had accepted as indisputable every line and word of our religious teaching, and his conscience was a relentless tyrant, governing his soul and controlling his conduct in every particular. It did so, indeed, to the very end of his life, but enlarged knowledge and a sounder thinking, as he grew older, wrought

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in him an enlightenment of mind which set him free from the bondage of narrow dogmatism to which as a boy he submitted himself, in full confidence that all the things he had been taught were direct revelations of God's will and purposes.

I wish to make this point clear. In all his life, I think, Edward Eggleston never permitted himself to do any act that his conscience forbade, or to leave undone any duty that his conscience enjoined. But while in childhood the dogmas in which he had been trained gave law to his thought, his intellect, as he grew older, asserted its right to question the authority of those dogmas, and he did so with utter fearlessness, and with the same conscientious courage that had in childhood led him to obey at whatever cost.

I do not remember many things so well as I remember the way in which he dealt with my doubts and questionings on this occasion. Adopting the views at that time taught us

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from the pulpit, he suggested that my doubts were directly inspired by the devil for the destruction of my soul, and perhaps also of his, for my presentation of the matter, he frankly confessed, had awakened the spirit of doubt in his own mind. He could not resolve the matter, but our best course, he suggested, would be to pray that we might not be led into temptation, and then put the matter out of our minds. The insight, the critical acumen, and the enlightenment which guided his thought so wisely in after life, had not yet come to the boy of a dozen years old.

If details of this character seem trivial to any reader, my answer is that they are necessary to the just fulfilment of the two purposes with which this work is written. Those purposes are first to trace the development of Edward Eggleston's mind, and second to present the completest picture I can of the life, the ideas and the tendencies of the time in which he was born and reared,

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as a part of that "culture history," that history of life in the United States which he made the theme of all his literary work, the object of all his studies.

CHAPTER VII.

Madison and New Conditions.



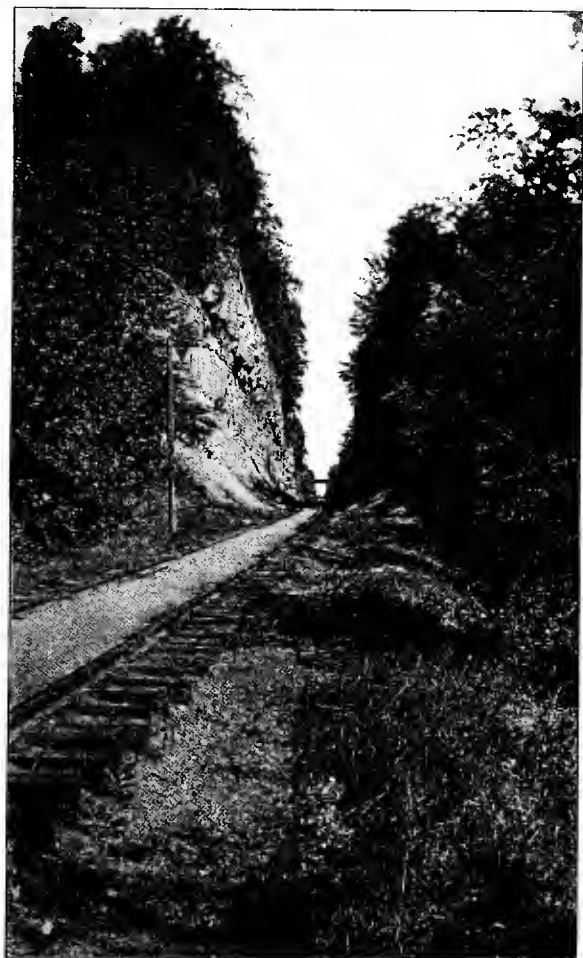
AT the time of our removal to Madison that town was in many respects the most important city in Indiana. It was distinctly the wealthiest of all of them, and the busiest.

A little while earlier Madison had been indisputably the largest of Indiana cities. It still disputed with Indianapolis and New Albany the supremacy in population, a claim the census of 1850 negatived, while in point of business—though signs of decline and decay were beginning to appear—Madison still held an undisputed lead. The census of 1850 showed the population of the little city to be 8012. A foot-note to the census report places it at 12,000 in 1852, though upon what authority does not appear. At that time its people “claimed” a population of

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20,000 or more. Then, as now, ambitious cities had the faculty of growing with extraordinary rapidity during the years when there was no census taking to correct the figures of the "claims."

Madison lies on the Ohio river, about ninety miles below Cincinnati, and about forty miles above Louisville. In those days the river was the one great highway, both of travel and of commerce. It was the endeavor of both to reach the river in the shortest, speediest and least expensive way possible. The enterprise of the early investors in Madison had wisely availed itself of this fact. They had secured the building of one of the earliest railroads in the State—the very earliest I think—from Madison to Indianapolis. With this artery of commerce leading into the interior, Madison quickly became the most important commercial city in the State. All the merchants in all the little towns in the interior purchased their goods, of every kind, from the wholesale



THE RAILROAD CUT NEAR MADISON, INDIANA

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houses in Madison. All the produce of all the farms was sent to Madison, to be forwarded thence by river to distant markets, and all the travel followed the same route. In addition to the daily, and at times twice daily, steamboats of the Louisville and Cincinnati Mail Line, Madison had daily packet lines of her own, some to Cincinnati and some to Louisville. There were frequent steamboats, stopping there, too, on their way from Cincinnati to New Orleans or St. Louis. Still again, there were multitudinous flatboats, taking cargoes at the busy little city for cheap transportation to New Orleans. The "levee" was a busy place, and the street fronting it was solidly built up with forwarding and commission houses, grain, flour and feed stores, establishments for the sale of provisions and boat stores, and other things of like kind. Streets farther from the river front were filled with wholesale houses.

Very naturally, the seat of so thriving a

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commerce became a centre of manufacturing industry also. There were several considerable foundries and machine shops there; an extensive shipyard; two great breweries; several flour mills of large capacity; many cooper-shops, planing mills, starch factories, lath works and a score or more of shops for minor manufacturing.

Greatest of all the town's industries in importance was pork packing. During the Crimean war Madison was indeed the most important seat of the pork packing industry in all the world.

As wealth abounded in the town, luxury was there also. Residences were built, some of which would be accounted fine even in our large cities of to-day, and life there took on aspects of ease and serenity which strongly impressed the minds of us two Hoosier boys, who had seen nothing of the kind before. The city was beautiful, with its broad, well shaded and smoothly graveled streets, and with well ornamented grounds surround-

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ing all the best houses. In brief, I may say truly that Madison, with its population of eight or ten thousand souls, wore the aspect of a real city, as no other town north of the Ohio and west of Cincinnati could then pretend to do. It alone looked like a city assuredly prosperous, and nowhere shabby with any appearance of raw newness. It alone of all the towns in Indiana had great banking houses of its own to support its commerce and its industries. Notable among these banking houses at that time was that of Winslow, Lanier & Co., which, when the trade of Madison fell into decay, removed to New York and became a recognized financial power in the metropolis.

As has been said already, Madison was just beginning to decline in trade and importance at the time of our removal to the city, and the decay proceeded rapidly during our stay there and afterwards. Other railroads were building from Indianapolis to Cincinnati and Louisville, while still others were

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stretching their lines toward St. Louis, Chicago, and from Indianapolis eastwardly to connect with railroads leading to New York, Philadelphia and Baltimore.

All these lines tended to rob Madison of its business. They diverted its trade to other and greater centres. They deprived the little city of the one advantage it had possessed. They took away its one reason for being, as a commercial and industrial town.

The decay was rapid. The imposing row of commission houses and their kind that fronted the river, were closed in a succession so rapid as to be almost startling. The wholesale houses farther from the river, which had enjoyed a great trade in dry goods, groceries, hardware, iron and nails, crockery, cordage and other staples of commerce, presently followed the example thus set. Within a year after we boys first knew the town, scarcely one of these establishments remained actively open. The few that still

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maintained a pretence of being in business did so chiefly because their owners had made comfortable fortunes, liked Madison as a place of residence, and enjoyed having in their stores and offices pleasant places in which to pass the daylight hours in converse with their friends.

But if Madison thus ceased to be a thriving seat of commerce and industry, it continued to be the chief centre of the culture, the intellectual activity, and the social refinement of Southern Indiana. I have before me as I write a long list, which I forbear to copy, of men who made Madison or its near neighborhood their home at that time, and who were conspicuously distinguished in State and nation for their abilities, their culture and their intellectual achievements.

Add to all these things the fact that the little city is surrounded by scenery of rare beauty and interest, and that it lies in a region richer, I think, than any other in all

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that part of the country, in geological formations of a kind likely to awaken the interest and enthusiasm of an eager boy; and the reader will understand how great a part his new surroundings played in the development of Edward Eggleston's mind and character.

Another advantage which our removal to Madison brought to Edward was a closer contact than he had ever before enjoyed with a man whose high character and richly dowered intellect made association with him a circumstance of the utmost consequence to such a boy as Edward was.

For what has need to be said concerning that gifted man and his influence, another chapter must be opened. Meanwhile I complete this one by saying that the only school Edward attended during our stay in Madison, was one in which education was conducted upon the old and very brutal "knock down and drag out" system.

There were two boys' schools of that kind in the town, each presided over by a

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man of adequate scholarship, but of almost demoniacal ferocity in discipline. As there was no other school in the town sufficiently advanced in its curriculum, Edward and I were sent to one of these.

Neither of us was ever made the victim of the brutality which dominated the school. I rejoice in that fact now, because I firmly intended then, and I am sure I should have carried out my purpose, to kill the teacher if he should ever horsewhip either Edward or myself in the bloodthirsty way in which he daily flogged other boys. It is a comfort to me that I escaped the deliberately anticipated necessity of committing homicide.

After the usual month or two of attendance upon this school, Edward fell ill again—made so, as he assured me in later years, chiefly by the nervous distress he suffered from the daily and hourly sight of the brutalities inflicted upon his schoolmates.

Long years afterward—after he had made his own name famous—Edward visited

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Madison, and while there declined the most important reception tendered to him, solely because he had learned that the teacher of that school "the keeper of that shambles" Edward called him, was still living and was to be one of the guests upon the occasion.

"I simply couldn't face that man, Georgie," he said to me when telling me of the matter. "The very thought of him filled me with the old-time terror."

Fortunately there presently came to Madison a system of graded schools, which at once made an end of the two "English and classical academies" that had so long survived as evil relics of the savage age in pedagogy.


The graded school system was fortunately organized and presided over by an educator of rare wisdom and humane mind, a Mr. Barnes. I know not whether he still lives or not, but to him, or to his memory as the case may be, I rejoice to pay a tribute of deserved gratitude.

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Edward did not at any time attend the graded schools in Madison. His health did not permit that, but after his customary fashion he diligently prosecuted his studies on his own account and made more rapid progress than he would have made had he been one of a class in school.

CHAPTER VIII.

Two Great Educators.

HE man referred to in the preceding chapter as exercising a peculiarly wholesome influence upon Edward Eggleston's mind and character at this period of his boyhood, was Guilford Dudley Eggleston.

I have never known a man who more perfectly satisfied the highest ideals I can form of manhood in its perfection than this somewhat distant kinsman of ours did. He was the son of our father's first cousin, Judge Myles Cary Eggleston, who was in his time one of the most learned and most distinguished jurists in all the region west of the Alleghenies. Our cousin Guilford had been educated in the best schools and colleges of his time, and, being a man of sufficient means, he had employed his abun-

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dant leisure in adding to his scholarship all that wisely directed reading, conscientiously liberal thinking, and more of travel and contact with intellectual men than was common at that time, could bring to a man of superior intellectual and moral character.

Better still, he was a man of unusual spiritual qualities that fascinated all with whom he came in contact and made him one of the best beloved of men. Sunny in temper, illimitably kindly and affectionate, abounding in healthful animal spirits, full of a humor that seemed to caress while it amused, he was an optimist who brought about the good that he so confidently hoped for.

From our earliest childhood this kinsman of ours had been Edward's ideal man and mine. His comings to our home were to us the gladdest of all happenings. From the moment of his coming to the hour of his departure we were in an ecstatic state of limitless joy. He made himself our com-

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panion, our ceaseless entertainer, and, without our knowing the fact, our wisest teacher.

Our return to Madison brought Edward directly and constantly under this man's influence and guidance. Edward was only about fourteen years old at the time, but his intellectual activity was already remarkable. Apart from his studies, he was reading voraciously in departments of literature and history which usually offer no attraction to boys of that age. When Col. Michael C. Garber, editor of the *Madison Courier*, offered a prize for the best essay that might be submitted to him for publication, Edward easily secured the award and immediately set himself down to read and love the poems of William Cullen Bryant, a good edition of which constituted the prize he had won.

He had already become enamored of Longfellow, but Pope had been, until that time, his favorite poet, perhaps because, in the "Essay on Man," the little poem on Solitude and some others, Pope strongly ap-

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pealed to the philosophical side of the meditative boy's nature.

He was fond of reading Burke, too, and Addison and Steele. He even read the elder Mill and Bentham, and much else of like character.

But his reading was self-directed, and not always wisely so. His habit of believing "that which is written" sometimes misled him through the influence of unsound writers and untrustworthy thinkers.

Our kinsman interested himself to correct this, and to guide both the studies and the intellectual exercises of the boy into profitable channels. He chose Edward's books for him, lending many from his own well-equipped library, some of them books to which otherwise the boy would not have had access.

Better still, this wise and most gentle mentor taught Edward how to think. He was at pains to correct the habit of too ready acceptance, to awaken in his pupil that

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intellectual independence without which reading is apt to be worse than profitless. He taught the boy to doubt, to question, to compare, to investigate, and to reason. He "breathed into his nostrils the breath of life."

And while thus educating the boy's mind, he was at equal pains to train his character. He laughed him out of a certain unwholesome asceticism which the ignorant dogmatism of a narrow religious teaching had bred in him. In a word, the wholesome influence of this man did more than all else at that time to bring moral and intellectual health to the boy, to enliven his life and strengthen all that was best in his nature, while repressing and correcting every tendency to morbidity of mind or spirit.

Speaking of this period of his boyhood in later life, Edward once said:

"I didn't suspect that Guilford was trying to teach me or even to influence me. I never found that out until after I became a

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man of middle age. At the time I thought he was merely trying, in his genial fashion, to make himself entertaining."

Edward was destined soon to be separated for a time from this close companionship with a mind and character so rare, but the separation brought him under another influence of like kind which was not less profitable to him.

After two years in Madison Mr. Terrell accepted an appointment under the American Bible Society, which required him to travel almost continually. Presently, therefore, the family was removed again to the old home in Vevay, and there Edward and I attended the newly established High School, presided over by Mrs. Julia L. Dumont, the wisest woman and the most successful teacher I have ever known. Elsewhere in this volume I have called her a Dr. Arnold in petticoats, but she was more even than that. Her gift of mastery over young minds was an inspiration, her sympathy with youthful

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thought and feeling was a sixth sense. Indeed her gift and her practice of encouraging pupils, was looked upon by many parents at that time as dangerous in tendency. To those who had been trained in the severities of an older and ruder time, praise for a pupil seemed a perilous throwing down of the bars of discipline. It was feared also that commendation might breed vanity and self-conceit of a kind to endanger the salvation of souls.

The graded school system was less successful in Vevay than had been hoped, and Mrs. Dumont—who taught solely because she loved the work and not at all because she needed to do so,—opened a little school of her own, sharply limiting it to ten boys —“*My ten boys*” she called us.

How she conducted school, what methods she employed and what results she attained, Edward has himself related in print, in a fashion which I cannot hope to improve upon by any writing of my own.

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His account of this gifted teacher was part of an article published in *Scribner's Monthly*,—now *The Century Magazine*,—for March, 1879. I am indebted to the courtesy of the Century Company, and of Dr. Richard Watson Gilder, the editor of the magazine, for a generous permission to copy here so much of the article as I wish. I copy all that part of it which relates to Mrs. Dumont.

“We had one teacher who was, so far as natural genius for teaching goes, the best of all I have ever known. Mrs. Julia L. Dumont is, like all our Western writers of that day, except Prentice, almost entirely forgotten. But in the time before railways, when the West, shut in by the Alleghenies, had an incipient literature, Mrs. Dumont occupied no mean place as a writer of poetry and prose tales. Eminent *litterateurs* of the time, from Philadelphia and Cincinnati, used to come to Vevay to see her; but they themselves—these great lights of ancient Ameri-

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can literature away back in the forties—are also forgotten. Who remembers Gallagher and the rest to-day? Dear brethren, who, like myself, scratch away to fill up magazine pages, and who, no doubt, like myself, are famous enough to be asked for an autograph or a 'sentiment' in an album sometimes, let us not boast ourselves. Why, indeed, should the spirit of mortal be proud? We also shall be forgotten—the next generation of school girls will get their autographs from a set of upstarts, who will smile at our stories and poems as out of date puerilities. Some industrious Allibone, making a cemetery of dead authors, may give us in his dictionary three lines apiece as a sort of headstone. Oh, let us be humble, and pray that even the Allibone that is to come do not forget us. For I look in vain in Allibone for some of the favorite names in our Western Parnassus. It was not enough that the East swallowed that incipient literature, it even obliterated the memory of it. * * *

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“Among those who have been so swiftly forgotten as not even to have a place in Allibone, is my old and once locally famous teacher, Mrs. Dumont. We thought her poem on ‘The Retreat of the Ten Thousand’ admirable, but we were partial judges. Her story of ‘Boonesborough’ was highly praised by the great lights of the time. But her book of stories is out of print, and her poems are forgotten, and so are the great lights who admired them. I do not pretend that there was enough in these writings to have made them deserve a different fate. Ninety-nine-hundredths of all good literary production must of necessity be forgotten; if the old trees endured forever there would be no room for the new shoots.

“But as a schoolmistress Mrs. Dumont deserves immortality. She knew nothing of systems, but she went unerringly to the goal by pure force of native genius. In all her early life she taught because she was poor, but after her husband’s increasing property

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relieved her from necessity, she still taught school from love of it. When she was past sixty years old, a school-room was built for her alongside her residence, which was one of the best in the town. It was here that I first knew her, after she had already taught two generations in the place. The 'graded' schools had been newly introduced, and no man was found who could, either in acquirements or ability, take precedence of the venerable schoolmistress; so the High School was given to her.

"I can see the wonderful old lady now, as she was then, with her cape pinned awry, rocking her splint-bottom chair nervously while she talked. Full of all manner of knowledge, gifted with something very like eloquence in speech, abounding in affection for her pupils and enthusiasm in teaching, she moved us strangely. Being infatuated with her, we became fanatic in our pursuit of knowledge, so that the school hours were not enough, and we had a 'lyceum' in the

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evening for reading compositions and a club for the study of history. If a recitation became very interesting, the entire school would sometimes be drawn into the discussion of the subject; all other lessons went to the wall, books of reference were brought out of her library, hours were consumed, and many a time the school session was prolonged until darkness forced us reluctantly to adjourn.

"Mrs. Dumont was the ideal of a teacher because she succeeded in forming character. She gave her pupils unstinted praise, not hypocritically, but because she lovingly saw the best in every one. We worked in the sunshine. A dull but industrious pupil was praised for diligence, a bright pupil for ability, a good one for general excellence. The dullards got more than their share, for, knowing how easily such an one is disheartened, Mrs. Dumont went out of her way to praise the first show of success in a slow scholar. She treated no two alike. She was full of all

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sorts of knack and tact, a person of infinite resource for calling out the human spirit. She could be incredibly severe when it was needful, and no overgrown boy whose meanness had once been analyzed by Mrs. Dumont ever forgot it.

"I remember one boy with whom she had taken some pains. One day he wrote an insulting word about one of the girls of the school on the door of a deserted house. Two of us were deputized by the other boys to defend the girl by complaining of him. Mrs. Dumont took her seat and began to talk to him before the school. The talking was all there was of it, but I think I never pitied any human being more than I did that boy as she showed him his vulgarity and his meanness, and as, at last, in the climax of her indignation, she called him 'a miserable hawbuck.' At another time, when she had picked a piece of paper from the floor with a bit of profanity written on it, she talked about it until the whole school-detected the

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author by the beads of perspiration on his forehead.

“When I had written a composition on ‘The Human Mind,’ based on Combe’s ‘Phrenology,’ and adorned with quotations from Pope’s ‘Essay on Man,’ she gave me to read an old ‘Encyclopedia Britannica,’ containing an article expounding the Hartleian system of mental philosophy, and followed this with Locke on the ‘Conduct of the Understanding.’ She was the only teacher I have known who understood that school studies were entirely secondary to general reading as a source of culture, and who put the habit of good reading first in the list of acquirements.

“There was a rack for hats and cloaks so arranged as to cut off a portion of the school from the teacher’s sight. Some of the larger girls who occupied this space took advantage of their concealed position to do a great deal of talking and tittering, which did not escape Mrs. Dumont’s watchfulness.

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But in the extreme corner of the room was the seat of Drusilla H——, who had never violated a rule of the school. To reprimand the others while excepting her would have excited jealousy and complaints. The girls who sat in that part of the room were detained after school and treated to one of Mrs. Dumont's tender but caustic lectures on the dishonorableness of secret ill-doing. Drusilla bore silently her share of the reproof. But at the last the schoolmistress said:

“‘Now, my dears, it may be that there is some one among you not guilty of misconduct. If there is, I know I can trust you to tell me who is not to blame.’

“‘Drusilla never talks,’ they all said at once, while Drusilla, girl like, fell to crying.

“But the most remarkable illustration of Mrs. Dumont's skill in matters of discipline was shown in a case in which all the boys of the school were involved, and were for a short time thrown into antagonism to

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a teacher whose ascendancy over them had been complete.

“We were playing ‘townball’ on the common, at a long distance from the school-room. Townball is one of the old games from which the more scientific but not half so amusing ‘national game’ of baseball has since been evolved. In that day the national game was not thought of. Eastern youth played field-base, and Western boys townball, in a free and happy way, with soft balls, primitive bats, and no nonsense. There were no scores, but a catch or a cross-out in townball put the whole side out, leaving the others to take the bat or ‘paddle,’ as it was appropriately called. The very looseness of the game gave opportunity for many ludicrous mischances and surprising turns, which made it a most joyous play.

“Either because the wind was blowing adversely, or because the play was more than commonly interesting, we failed to hear the ringing of Mrs. Dumont’s bell at one o’clock.

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The afternoon wore on until more than an hour of school time had passed, when some one suddenly bethought himself. We dropped the game and started, pell-mell, full of consternation, for the school-room. We would at that moment have preferred to face an angry schoolmaster, with his beechen rod, than to have offended one whom we revered so much. The girls all sat in their places; the teacher was sitting, silent and awful, in her rocking-chair; in the hour and a half no lessons had been recited. We shuffled into our seats and awaited the storm. It was the High School, and the boys were mostly fifteen or sixteen years of age, but the schoolmistress had never a rod in the room. Such weapons are for people of fewer resources than she. Very quietly she talked to us, but with great emphasis. She gave no chance for explanation or apology. She was hopelessly hurt and offended. We had humiliated her before the whole town, she said. She should take away from us the

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morning and afternoon recess for a week. She would demand an explanation from us to-morrow.

“It was not possible that a company of boys could be kept for half an hour in such a moral sweat-box as that to which she treated us without growing angry. When school was dismissed we held a running indignation meeting, as we walked toward home. Of course, we all spoke at once. But after awhile the more moderate saw that the teacher had some reason. Nevertheless, one boy* was appointed to draft a written reply that should set forth our injured feelings. I remember in what perplexity that committee found himself. With every hour he felt more and more that the teacher was right and the boys wrong, and that by the next morning the reviving affection of the scholars for the beloved and venerated schoolmistress would

*The “one boy” thus commissioned was Edward Eggleston, though his modesty forbade him to say so. He was recognized as morally and intellectually the superior of all of us—the captain of the school in all matters involving brains or character.

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cause them to appreciate this. So that the address which was presented for their signatures did not breathe much indignation. I can almost recall every word of that somewhat pompous but very sincere petition. It was about as I give it here:

Honored Madam:—

In regard to our offence of yesterday, we beg that you will do us the justice to believe that it was not intentional. We do not ask you to remit the punishment you have inflicted in taking away our recess, but we do ask you to remit the heavier penalty we have incurred, your own displeasure.

“The boys all willingly signed this except one, who was perhaps the only conscious offender in the party. He confessed that he had observed that the sun was ‘getting a little slanting’ while we were at play, but as his side ‘had the paddles,’ he did not say anything until they were put out. The unwilling boy wanted more indignation in the address, and he wanted the recess back. But when all the others had signed he did not dare leave his name off, but put it at the bottom of the list.



EDWARD EGGLESTON IN 1865

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“With trembling hands we gave the paper to the schoolmistress. How some teachers would have used such a paper as a means of further humiliation to the offenders! How few could have used it as she did! The morning wore on without recess. The lessons were heard as usual. As the noon hour drew near Mrs. Dumont rose from her chair and went into the library. We all felt that something was going to happen. She came out with a copy of Shakespeare, which she opened at the fourth scene of the fourth act of the second part of King Henry IV. Giving the book to my next neighbor and myself, she bade us read the scene, alternating with the change of speaker. You remember the famous dialogue in that scene between the dying king and the prince who has prematurely taken the crown from the bedside of the sleeping king. It was all wonderfully fresh to us and to our school-mates, whose interest was divided between the scene and a curiosity as to the use the

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teacher meant to make of it. At length the reader who took the king's part read:

'O my son!

Heaven put it in thy mind to take it hence,
That thou mightst win the more thy father's love,
Pleading so wisely in excuse of it.'

"Then she took the book and closed it. The application was evident to all, but she made us a touching little speech, full of affection, and afterward restored the recess. She detained the girls after we had gone, to read to them the address, that she might 'show them what noble brothers they had.' Without doubt she made overmuch of our nobleness. But no one knew better than Mrs. Dumont that the surest way of evoking the best in man or boy is to make the most of the earliest symptoms of it. From that hour our schoolmistress had our whole hearts; we loved her and revered her; we were thoughtless enough, but for the most of us her half-suspected wish was a supreme law.

"So, after all, it does not matter that the

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world no longer reads her stories or remembers her poems. Her life always seemed to me a poem, or something better than a poem."

At the risk of seeming intrusive, I venture to add to Edward's reminiscences of Mrs. Dumont, one of my own. I do so because the incident I have to relate additionally illustrates Mrs. Dumont's peculiar gift of seeing, in each case, to what motive the strongest appeal could be made.

Until I came under her instruction, I had not been able to learn to write. All my previous teachers had failed to teach me even the rudiments of that art. One after another of them had abandoned the effort in disgust, convinced that there was a natural inaptitude on my part which no effort could overcome. In addition to the instruction given me in ordinary schools, I had been placed successively under the tuition of several peripatetic writing masters who had come our way, but all to no purpose. Do

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what they would I could not learn to write. I could not myself read my own manuscript after it had "grown cold." The pen, as my teachers made me hold it, was as unwieldy in my grasp as a cord-wood stick or a fence rail. I could do nothing with it.

My latest writing master was still in town, achieving distinction by teaching all the young people, and some of their elders, to make "hair lines" for their up strokes and heavily shaded ones for down strokes, and to decorate their paper with elaborately meaningless "flourishes." He had made a positively desperate attempt to teach me to write. He had tied up my fingers with blue ribbons to compel me to hold my pen correctly. He had written the word "miserable" across each page of my copy-book—emphasizing his criticism by even more elaborate flourishes than usual. He had called me "dunce," "booby" and other pet names of like sort, and finally he had dismissed me from his school, sending my mother a letter,

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in which he assured her that it was useless to make any further effort to teach me an art which I was wholly incapable of learning.

I suppose that Mrs. Dumont had been informed of all this. At any rate, when I asked her to excuse me from all writing exercises, she assumed a look of admiring astonishment and asked:

“Why, has Mr. Wilson (the writing master) taught you to write so well that you can learn no more? He must be a wonderful teacher!”

Only the pride and resolution of a sturdy boy kept back the tears as I answered, in deep humiliation:

“No, Mrs. Dumont, I can never learn to write.”

“Who says that?” she asked, quietly.

“Mr. Wilson and—and every teacher I ever had.”

“Let me look at your hand, George,” she gently said, and I held it out for inspection. She seemed to study it closely, manip-

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ulating the fingers one after another. Then she said:

"I hear that you are the best marble player in town. Is that so?"

My pockets at that moment were bulging with a multitude of marbles which I had recently won, and I pleaded guilty to a degree of skill in that sport which made it risky for any boy to try conclusions with me in a game of "keeps."

"And yet Mr. Wilson says you cannot learn to write? Perhaps he called you a 'booby,' too?"

"Yes," I answered, "and a 'dunce.'"

"Perhaps he tied up your fingers in blue ribbons to make you hold the pen in his way?"

I was well nigh appalled by this exhibition of mind reading, but I managed to answer that he had done precisely as she had said.

"Well, now, George," she said, in her peculiarly caressing voice, "you and I are

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going to find out who is the 'booby' in this case—you, who can learn anything you please, or a writing master who doesn't know that a boy who can play marbles can be taught to write. Now, I'll tell you what you and I are going to do. I am going to teach you to write a clear, legible and sensible hand ; and two weeks from to-day—don't forget to remind me of the date—two weeks from to-day you are going to write a letter to Mr. Wilson. I will dictate it, and you shall write it and sign it. When he gets it he too will know who the 'booby' is."

That wise woman's battle was won. No teacher had ever talked to me in any such way as that. None had ever so aroused my ambition. In that hour I made up my mind that I would learn to write, and to write well, if I had to give all my nights and days to the task. Mrs. Dumont believed in me; her faith should not be disappointed. She had only to tell me what to do and how, and I would do it, even if it involved physical torture.

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And how wisely she set to work to teach me! First of all she told me that all "flourishing" in writing was a silly thing, not only useless but positively harmful, in that it interfered with legibility. Secondly, she ridiculed the idea, beloved of writing masters, that the up strokes should be "hair lines," and the down strokes heavily shaded.

"Why is not one part of a letter as important as any other part?" she asked. Then she explained to me that the object one has in view in writing is to set down the words in such a way that other people may read what you have written; that absolute legibility is the first and chief virtue of a handwriting, and that the only other thing to be sought after is facility—the ability to write rapidly and easily.

This instruction gave me a totally new conception of the art I was set to learn, and a very helpful conception it was, particularly after I observed how beautiful my teacher's handwriting was in its absolute simplicity.

Two Great Educators

"Now, to begin with," she said, when I took my first writing lesson at her hands, "you are to hold the pen in the way that seems most natural to you—the way which best enables you to make the marks you intend."

I welcomed this permission and grasped my pen in a peculiarly awkward way.

"You do hold a pen rather queerly," she said. "But never mind that now. We'll correct that little by little as we go on. At present you are going to learn to write legibly, giving no heed to anything else."

To my utter astonishment I could read the lines I wrote for my first lesson. Within three or four days my handwriting began to look like Mrs. Dumont's own, and by the end of the appointed two weeks this resemblance had become so close that the two were distinguishable only by the greater certainty and precision of form that marked hers.

Then came the letter to Mr. Wilson.

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It ran somewhat as follows—for I think I remember almost verbatim a missive which it gave me boundless joy to write at my teacher's dictation:

“Dear Sir:—


I am writing this letter at the dictation of my teacher, Mrs. Dumont. Mrs. Dumont thinks you should be pleased to see that, after two weeks of instruction, I have learned to write a legible and sensible hand, and that I am not quite so hopeless a booby as you thought me.”

I begged permission to insert the word “intelligent” before the word “instruction,” but my teacher said me nay.

“He will be sufficiently taught by the letter as it stands,” she explained.

CHAPTER IX.

The Formative Period.

 UNDER the influences described in the last preceding chapter, Edward's mind developed rapidly.

His extensive reading of the best books, and, still more, his intimacy with two such minds as Guilford Eggleston's and Mrs. Dumont's, could not fail to aid and hasten the intellectual and moral development of a boy so gifted and so earnest as he.

The results are easily enough understood, but they were somewhat paradoxical. Edward at one and the same time grew much older and much younger than he had been. In his thinking he became more mature than before; in his spirit he grew far more boyish than he had ever been.

Under spur of the ascetic religious teaching he had received from the pulpit

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utterances of men whose oratorical exaggerations he took in their literal sense, Edward had become positively morbid in his conscientiousness, during his early youth. As an illustration, I remember that at one time—when he had attained the ripe age of eleven—he suddenly began a rigid suppression of conversational gifts which were extremely good in one so young. Often he would remain silent for hours. When he talked at all he stripped his sentences of every word that could be spared, and spoke only of serious and solemn things. His natural impulse to lightness in conversation was repressed. His humor, which was always the delight of his companions, was kept under a restraint as severe as if he had been a monk in a season of “retreat.”

Against all this the thoughtless youngster who writes these lines out of a gray-haired memory violently revolted. I wanted my brother back. I wanted to hear him talk. I wanted the smiles on my own

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face that his humor always engraved there. I wanted to be in touch with his naturally genial and jovial spirit again. So I challenged him to tell me why he had suddenly become so restrained in speech. For answer he opened the New Testament and showed me the passage which reads:

“But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment.”

After the fashion of that time he had taken that passage literally, as he took, and as the preachers insisted upon taking every other passage of the Scriptures. And by “idle words” he understood the text to mean all unnecessary words.

In those days well-ordered young persons were carefully taught to say “yes, ma’am” and “no, ma’am,” “yes, sir” and “no, sir”; but Edward’s spiritual eye was fixed upon “the day of judgment,” and in fear of that he resolutely dropped the “ma’am” and “sir,” as “idle words” for

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which, if he spoke them, he must give an account at that dread time.

In brief, Edward was beset in his boyhood by that "lust after perfection," of which he afterwards pointed out the evil consequences in his novel of New York life, "The Faith Doctor," calling it "the realest peril of great souls."

Indeed, his condition of mind and soul for a time was the original from which in later, maturer, and more enlightened years, he drew the portrait of Phillida, the devotee heroine of that novel.

The influence of Guilford Eggleston and Mrs. Dumont corrected all this, and Edward learned of them a wiser and a more wholesome philosophy of life than that which the half-baked theology of that time had taught him. He learned of them a better gospel than that of asceticism. He grew healthier of mind, and with that change came a greater bodily health. He was still lacking in physical robustness, but he had

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learned that it was his right to enjoy and to exercise such physical capacities as were his.

The first result of this was that his health did not break down under school work as it had so often done before, though he was studying harder and reading more than he had ever done. The tonic administered to his mind was potent also in strengthening his body. Feeling now that he might indulge, without sin, those impulses of physical activity which nature implants in all boys for their good, Edward entered upon our sports with a spirit that quickly made him monarch of the playground. Others of us could outrun him. Some of us could throw or bat or catch a ball with greater precision than he could. But we were a careless, heedless crew, while he brought his conscience to bear upon our playground games as earnestly as he had ever done in more important things. To him it seemed that, having accepted a place on one or the other side of a game, he was in duty and

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conscience bound to do his very best for the success of his side. We would sometimes "miss" through heedlessness or a lack of sufficient care in the performance of our parts; he never did. If he missed at all it was because he could not avoid doing so by the most conscientious endeavor. If one of us missed catching or batting a ball that our known skill made it possible to catch or bat, our comrades jeered at us as "butter fingers," or more seriously quarreled with us for carelessness. But if Edward missed it was understood that the catch or bat stroke was beyond his utmost power to achieve.

As a consequence of this conscientiousness in play, he soon came to be the first boy selected whenever we "chose up" for a game. We all knew that there were more skilful players than he among us; but we also knew that we could trust his conscientiousness of endeavor to give better results in the game than our superior but carelessly exercised skill could hope for.

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His moral supremacy was even more marked. In that school-boy republic all were equal in their rights, of course, and there was never the smallest hesitation on the part of any of us in the formation or the expression of an opinion. We stoutly insisted upon freedom of speech and majority rule. But Edward's speech, though no freer than that of any other, always carried greater weight, and, if his opinion was pronounced, he constituted a majority in every case.

"Seems to me we ought to do so and so," one of the boys would say, "but Ed. Eggleston says not, and of course he knows best."

"Of course he does," the rest of us would answer, and that settled the matter. It was a case of MacGregor's seat being the head of the table.

This supremacy of personal influence was not gained by self-assertion, for there was no boy in the school less given than Edward was to assume the rights of a dictator.

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It was solely the result of our confidence in his superior judgment, and, still more important, his absolute conscientiousness. With us the wish was often father to the thought; with him it never was. With us desire might influence conviction; with him, we knew, personal preference played no part at all. And so his judgments were always final and conclusive, however clamorously we might contend against them in arguing the matter in hand before the decision was rendered.

I remember that we were once engaged in a hot discussion of this kind when Mr. Dumont, the husband of our teacher, and a lawyer of great distinction, drove up in his buggy. He stopped the horse and held up his hand for silence, and the silence instantly came.

"Boys," he said, "I have a suggestion to make to you. In the days of my young manhood I used to attend town meetings. The people were disposed to squabble some-

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times, just as you boys were doing a moment ago. To prevent that the town meeting always chose one man to be 'moderator,' and gave him authority to keep order and decide debates. You boys ought to have a 'moderator.'"

Instantly one of the boys called out:

"Oh, we don't need a moderator, Mr. Dumont. We jabber and chatter as much as we please, but we know all the time that when Ed. Eggleston gets ready he'll decide the question, and that'll end it."

Edward was meanwhile using his influence in behalf of our culture in other ways. He organized a debating society to meet in that little red brick building in our grounds which had formerly been our father's law office, and which now served Edward and me as bedroom, study room and general headquarters.

Of this association he was promptly made chairman, and although he was not yet sixteen years old, he set to work to make of

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the club something more than an ordinary debating society. It was he that dictated our choice of subjects for debate, and having chosen them, he pointed out to each of the debaters the books that ought to be read in preparation for an intelligent discussion of the subject in hand. Many of these books were drawn from our mother's library—by all odds the richest in Vevay in the list of its standard books, with the single exception of Mrs. Dumont's collection, which was held always open to our freest use. But Edward borrowed for our reading everything else that could be had, and which could, by any possibility, help to enlighten our minds. The Presbyterian minister had a hundred books or so which he freely placed at our disposal, and, upon learning what we were doing, Guilford Eggleston wrote to Edward, commanding him to write each week, stating the contemplated subjects of debate, in order that he might select and send to Vevay all the books in his own library that might

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in any wise bear upon the subject under discussion.

This wise and most generous mentor went even further than that. Crippled as he was at the time, by reason of an accident involving his ankle, he made a special journey to Vevay in order that he might talk to our debating club and show us how to make the most profitable use of our time in reading. Full of wisdom and discretion as he was, he was equally full of good spirits, and a matchless sympathy with boyish ambitions for self improvement. He talked to us, not from a superior height, but upon a level, and perhaps no service that Edward ever did to his comrades was so greatly good as bringing Guilford Eggleston to talk to us.

In these endeavors to carry his comrades along with him in his apprenticeship to culture, Edward was mindful of the weaker ones in a specially tender fashion. There was one boy in the town who did not belong to the school, because he was not sufficiently

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educated to enter it. He was the son of an Irish laborer, but he had inherited none of his father's wit or shrewdness. His sisters had successfully passed through Mr. Wasson's school, and stood well as young women of education and refinement; but poor John had a certain intellectual deficiency which sadly stood in his way. We boys did not think of him even as a possible member of our coterie. But one day he met Edward and said to him:

"I love verses. Have you got any verses in your club?"

Edward answered that we had not as yet taken up poetry, but that he would act upon the suggestion at once and introduce some exercises that should involve verse. Then he summoned the rest of us and proposed that we should elect John a member of our circle. We instantly and almost clamorously objected. That boy was not of our kind—not in our class, we argued.

"That is precisely the reason why we

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should take him into our society," Edward rejoined. "He needs our association as no one of us boys needs it."

So, under the orders of our master mind we took John into our society, and Edward so rearranged our programs as to include in each of them the recitation or the reading of a certain proportion of inspiring verse.

I saw John three years ago and talked with him. He is an elderly man now, and, while still a rather uneducated person, he is a good citizen, a good husband and a good father. He said to me:

"It was mighty good of you boys to take me in, and that was the turning point with me. Somehow, after you let me into the club, I felt that I mustn't go wrong, and I didn't. I remembered the verses Edward used to say, about—

' So live, that when thy summons comes to join
The innumerable caravan which moves
To that mysterious realm where each shall take
His chamber in the silent halls of death,

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Thou go not like the quarry slave at night,
Scourged to his dungeon, but sustained and soothed
By an unfaltering trust, approach thy grave
Like one who wraps the drapery of his couch
About him, and lies down to pleasant dreams.'

"You boys made a man of me when you let me join that club. I'm not much of a job for such fellows to turn out, but anyhow you made me the man I am, and God only knows what I should have become if you hadn't let me in."

Here surely was one of Edward Eggleston's sheaves, of a kind which no man need be ashamed to offer to the Supreme Master of the Universe in proof of his harvest's worthiness.

One of the results of Edward's larger enlightenment at this time was that I suffered at his hands the only thrashing I ever got from any boy. I was accustomed to fight my way through all difficulties, as the manner of Hoosier boys was. I can remember only a very few of my schoolmates with whom I did not, at one time or other, settle

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a controversy by a bout with bare knuckles; but as I was unusually strong, uncommonly nimble, and much given to ready aggressiveness in conflict, it had never happened to me to get so much the worst of any battle as to be compelled to cry "'nough"—the accepted form of surrender at that time.

In his earlier boyhood, Edward had adopted the non-combatant teaching of the Sermon on the Mount, and had resolutely abided by it, with the result that I had been obliged to thrash several fellows bigger than myself by way of avenging assaults made upon him, which he would not himself resist. But under his new instruction Edward so far abandoned the practice of non-resistance as to give me, on one occasion, the one good, sound thrashing that I so greatly needed for the chastening of my spirit.

The way of it was this. Edward and I, with a school-fellow, Will Campbell, remained on the ice one day, after the game of shinny was done, and after all the other boys had

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gone home. For some reason which I cannot recall, I was in a querulous, cantankerous mood, and strongly disposed to pick a quarrel with Will Campbell. Will was the gentlest-natured boy in the town. I think he could have whipped me easily in a stand-up fight, as he was a year or so my senior and very athletic, but he was by nature averse to quarreling. So on this occasion he accepted my taunts meekly—so meekly that I wanted to whip him for not whipping me. At last I threatened to strike him with my shinny stick. Thereupon Edward fiercely turned upon me and said:

“George, if you strike Will I’ll thrash you.”

Now I perfectly well knew that he meant what he said. I also perfectly well knew that if I chose to resist, I was greatly more than a match for my half-invalid brother, and could easily and quickly dispose of any effort he might make to overcome my superior strength and agility. But I knew also that



ON THE NORTH MADISON ROAD

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should Edward attack me, I would offer no manner of resistance. I could no more think of striking him than of striking my mother.

Still his words constituted what we boys called a "dare," and it was an accepted saying among us that "anybody who will take a dare will steal a sheep."

I did not really want or intend to strike Will Campbell with my shinny stick; but in saying what he did, Edward had in effect "dared" me to give the blow, and by all the principles of school-boy ethics I was bound to meet the "dare" half way. So I struck Will, not violently, and not even in a fashion that could inflict the least pain, but with just sufficient force to make the blow good as an acceptance of the challenge.

Instantly Edward skated to the shore and deliberately began taking off his skates. Mine were already off, and as I was much fleet of foot than he, I might easily have run away. But had I done that, I should

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have incurred intolerable disgrace in the eyes of all the boys in town. So I stood my ground, and presently Edward, in righteous wrath, assailed me. As I made no resistance, he soon had me on my back, while he sat astride my chest, vigorously boxing my ears and calling to me to say "'nough." That I refused to do, and to this day I am unable to guess how the affair would have ended, if Will Campbell had not generously come to my assistance, dragging Edward away.

But while I had resolutely refused to the very end to cry "'nough," I was sufficiently conquered to answer all the moral purposes that my brother had had in view. Recognizing the generosity of Will Campbell's act in coming to my assistance, I held out my hand to the boy and said: "I hope I didn't hurt you, Will! I didn't mean to."

He grasped my hand warmly—dear, great-hearted fellow that he was—and so the "incident was closed," as the diplomats say.

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If the incidents related in this chapter seem to any reader trivial, it must be admitted that in themselves they are so. But they are related, as everything else in this most irregularly constructed book is, by way of illustrating the life conditions that helped in the development of Edward Eggleston's mind, and at the same time showing forth the native characteristics of a person who was destined later to make his mark as a force in American life and letters.

When the school year was over, Edward served for a time as a clerk in a store, kept by Mr. William Shaw, a Scotchman of high and singularly lovable character, and his son, a man like unto himself, who is still in active life. I do not know but that I should include Edward's association with these two men of exceptional high-mindedness and purity as another of the forces that helped, at the formative period of his life, to mould him into the man that he afterwards became. I know that to the hour of his death he


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lovingly cherished the memory of his association with these two and with their families, as among the most precious of his recollections.

In some way, too, he found time at this period to work gratuitously in the printing office of the local newspaper, where he not only learned to set type, but practiced his writing gift by contributing now and then to the newspaper's columns. When he did that he set up his thought in type without previously putting it on paper. All the while he maintained his comradery with Mrs. Dumont who, though she had ceased to be his teacher, continued to be not only his revered friend, but also his mentor in all that pertained to his reading and thinking.

CHAPTER X.

The Virginian Influence.

NOTHING in the way of formative influences could have been better than the life of these years was as a preparation for what was to follow in Edward Eggleston's moral and intellectual development. Nor could any sequel to these years have been better for him than that which came.

Our father's relatives in Virginia had long urged that Edward should go to them for a prolonged visit, and in June, 1854, when he was sixteen years of age, he and our only sister, four or five years his junior, set out upon this first pilgrimage to the old home of our people. The thirteen months of their absence constituted the first separation that had ever occurred between Edward and myself. His stay in Virginia had an

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important educational influence upon his mind, and his letters thence influenced me in a way that few other things have ever done.

Our father's only brother, a childless man of middle age, was master of the old home plantation in Amelia county, which had been the family seat since 1635. There all our race had been nurtured for many generations. Adjoining that plantation was another Eggleston seat of like age in family possession. This was "Egglestetton," which had been the home of Major Joseph Eggleston, of revolutionary fame, the cherished second in command of Light Horse Harry Lee. At the time of Edward's stay in Virginia, this was the home of Major Joseph Eggleston's descendants. These two plantations had been one at first, constituting a princely domain. But when the father of Major Joseph Eggleston and his brother, our great-grandfather, had come of age, the vast plantation had been divided between

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them. Since that time neither half of it had suffered any further division, so that Edward found there in effect two ancestral homes open to him with a welcome. But he dwelt in neither of them for any considerable time. He went instead to live mainly with our uncle by marriage, Mr. Chastain Cocke, a planter and statesman, whose home was in the adjoining county of Powhatan.

Chastain Cocke was a man of unusual ability and of extraordinary character. I knew him well a little later, and I have certainly never known any other man whom I have reckoned his superior in those high qualities of manhood which there are still some of us left to revere in the name of chivalry.

Never in all his life did Chastain Cocke knowingly do a wrong or an injustice to any human being, great or humble, black or white, man, woman or child. Never in all his life did he fail in an obligation or delay its fulfilment one hour beyond the appointed

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time, no matter how free he might be to delay, or how much of trouble it might cost him to meet his duty on time. I remember one occasion when he impressed this lesson of good faith on my mind in a striking way. His health was very frail at the time, and the weather was excessively bad, with a distressing sleet storm on, which quickly rendered the clothing of any one venturing out a coat of icy mail.

He called me to him immediately after breakfast, and said to me:

"This is terrible weather, my boy, but you are robust and fearless, and I am sure you want to oblige me."

I promptly assured him that nothing could delight me more than to render him any possible service, and that, as for bad weather, I rather rejoiced in braving it than shrank from its discomforts.

"I am sure of that," he said, "and I thank you. I want you to pick out the sturdiest horse in my stables this morning,

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mount him and ride to ——," naming a plantation thirty miles away. "When you are ready I'll give you your commission."

I knew the horse I wanted—an untamed stallion, seventeen hands high, with the temper of a maniac and the physical endurance of a locomotive. Mounted upon that beast's back, booted and spurred, and additionally equipped with a black-snake whip for disciplinary purposes, I departed on my mission, which was simply to pay to my uncle's friend at the other end of the journey a few hundred dollars which happened to be due on that day, on a purchase of land.

When I reached my destination, after galloping a trifle of the superfluous enthusiasm out of that superb horse, the gentleman to whom I had been sent to make the payment, said to me :

"Has your uncle gone quite daft? Why should he make you ride thirty miles through a sleet storm like this, merely to pay me money which he knows I don't want, and

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which I couldn't go out in such weather to pay out again, even if I had pressing debts to meet, as I have not? Tell him for me, please, never to do such a thing again. And now that you're safe here, I'm going to keep you until the weather grows reasonable again."

I agreed to deliver the message, but declined the hospitality laughingly, on the ground that if that demoniacal horse were left standing in a stable until the next morning, I might not be able to ride him at all. My real reason for setting out on my return immediately after dinner, was that I knew how anxious my good uncle would be about me until I should report all well at home again.

When I stalked into the supper room that evening at 8 o'clock, with all my garments frozen stiff, my uncle welcomed me warmly enough to thaw them out; but he bade me go to my room, sending a negro boy with me, and saying:

"I will not take another mouthful of

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supper until you return." The rest can go on with their meal. Nelson," (addressing the head dining room servant), "take my plate away. Lay a little table for your Mas' George and myself, and send word to Patty (the cook) to prepare the very best supper she can for us two." Then turning to his wife, my father's sister, with that courtesy with which he never failed to treat her whom he had made queen of his household, he said:

"Mary, my dear, you'll preside at our little table, I'm sure. But meanwhile please make your supper, for it isn't well for you to have your meals disturbed."

When we were seated at a cosy little table before the fire, for I was still shivering with cold after my sixty miles' ride in the storm, I delivered the messages that had been given to me. In response my uncle said, with exceeding emphasis:

"George, I should have made that terrible journey myself to-day if I had not had

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your young man's vigor and your good will to act as my substitute. Of course I knew that Mr. —— did not care to have that money paid to-day; but all my life I have made it a rule to pay every dollar I owed on the precise day on which it was due, no matter if it cost me two dollars for every one dollar owed. The result of that is that my name is good in every bank in Richmond for any sum that I may happen to want. Let me commend that rule to you. Remember always that when you promise to pay money on the 21st of a given month, your creditor is entitled to expect it on that day, and not on the 22d. He may have obligations of his own to meet, and he may have counted upon your prompt payment as his means of meeting them. No man need undertake an obligation unless he wishes to do so. But having undertaken it, he is in honor bound to fulfil it, no matter what happens. Now, you haven't said a word about it, but I know that you had to swim a

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swollen river twice to-day, in order to make this payment for me. I did not hesitate to ask you to do that in redemption of my honor, because I knew the loyalty of your affection. But if I had not had you for a substitute, I should have made the journey myself, swimming the river as a necessary part of the proceeding."

How true it was that Chastain Cocke's name was good in any Richmond bank for any sum that he might ask for, and all because of his life-long habit of meeting every obligation in the hour of its falling due, is best illustrated by the record of a certain trying experience.

Besides his home plantation in Virginia, he had two cotton plantations in Mississippi. The two used a single gin house, and one year that gin house burned, destroying the whole of his cotton crop. It became necessary for him to borrow a large sum of money to cover his domestic and plantation expenses until another crop should come in.

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The bank in Richmond readily advanced the money.

About that time a friend of his own, a man of old family and high repute, who was an inveterate and incurable visionary, asked Chastain Cocke to endorse his paper in order that he might raise the money necessary to carry out one of his many wild schemes. My uncle refused, upon the ground that he could not regard the project as a sound one. But his friend was so sure of its safety that he forged Mr. Cocke's endorsement upon a note for five thousand dollars. He fully intended to take up the note before it should fall due, so that nobody should ever know of the forgery and nobody should be harmed by it.

As usually happens in such cases, the enterprise failed, and one day my uncle received notice that a note for five thousand dollars, signed by his friend and endorsed by himself, would fall due within three days, and that, as the drawer of the note had given

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notice of his inability to pay, the bank must look to Mr. Cocke to meet the obligation.

This news came like a thunder clap out of a clear sky to my uncle. He had never before heard of the note in question, but he promptly went to Richmond and, visiting the bank, asked to see the paper. A glance at it revealed the entire situation to him. But the guilty man was the representative of an old and highly honored family. He had a wife and daughters who must suffer lasting disgrace should this thing become known. So my uncle decided that no exposure should be made, if by any self-sacrifice he could avoid that misfortune. He said to the bank officer:

“I had not expected to be called upon to pay this note. I have made no preparation for the emergency. I am already in debt to the bank.”

Here the bank officer interrupted him to say:

“That makes no difference whatever,

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Mr. Cocke. You can take up this paper with your own note at whatever time you may choose to make it payable—three months hence, or three years if you prefer.”

Chastain Cocke did that generous thing. In order to save the wife and daughters of his erring friend from the disgrace which exposure would have brought upon them, he deliberately executed his note for five thousand dollars which he did not owe, and, upon going home, cast into the fire the evidence of his friend’s misconduct.

But this was not destined to be the end of the matter. A little later my uncle was summoned to serve upon the grand jury of his county. Under Virginian law every grand juryman was required to pledge himself, under oath, to report to the grand jury any and every criminal act of which he might have had cognizance within a prescribed period. This note forgery came within the period fixed upon by the statute, and if Chastain Cocke had taken the oath of a

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grand juryman he must have reported the facts. This he was in no wise minded to do, so he asked to be excused from grand jury service. The court declined to excuse him, whereupon he said: "Then I must respectfully decline to serve."

The Judge answered:

"But, Mr. Cocke, you have no option in this matter. The court orders you to serve, and you must."

"But I cannot, if the court please, without violating what I deem to be an obligation of sacred honor, and surely you do not wish to compel me to do that. You cannot compel me, indeed, for under no compulsion, no matter what the penalty may be, will I take the grand juror's oath to-day."

Feeling that it would not do to excuse so prominent a citizen while refusing to excuse others, the Judge pleaded earnestly with him, finally asking him to state his reason for refusing to serve. To that Mr. Cocke replied:

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“It so happens that I know of a felony committed within this jurisdiction within the last six months. I alone am the victim of that crime, but should I reveal it other and altogether innocent people—women and young girls—must suffer cruel and lasting disgrace. I have accepted the rôle of victim. I have made a sore pecuniary sacrifice in order to conceal the facts of this matter—facts which concern nobody on earth but myself—from public knowledge. I have destroyed all evidence in the case. I cannot serve on this grand jury without swearing to reveal those facts, and so, with the profoundest respect for the court, I must positively and peremptorily decline to serve.”

The judge was terribly troubled. He walked back and forth upon the bench in agonizing distress of mind. Finally he turned to Mr. Cocke and said :

“My duty compels me to insist upon your service. If you refuse, it will be my duty to fine you to the full extent of your

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property, and to imprison you until such time as you shall yield. Mr. Cocke, you simply *must* serve."

To this my uncle answered: "It grieves me to subject your honor to any embarrassment. But I simply cannot serve as a grand jurymen to-day, and I will not. Your honor knows far better than I do, for I am not a lawyer, what your duty is, and I have no doubt that you will discharge it, even if it strips me of all earthly possessions and condemns me to pass the remainder of my days in jail. You, sir, are too much a man of honor not to understand me when I say to you that in my judgment I cannot serve as a grand juror to-day without making such a sacrifice of honor as would be impossible to you, and is equally impossible to me. Finally, and once for all, with the utmost respect for the court, I positively decline to serve, and as a citizen accustomed to submit to the law, I await your sentence."

Again the judge paced backwards and

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forwards in the space in rear of the bench. After a time he turned to the clerk and asked:

“Mr. Clerk, what is Mr. Cocke worth, over and above his debts?”

The clerk told him. Then he paced his beat again for a time, after which he paused and said:

“Mr. Cocke, you must.”

“Your honor, I cannot,” was the smiling answer of the man who, for the sake of his honor, stood ready to forfeit not only all his earthly possessions, but his liberty besides.

Then suddenly the judge turned to the clerk, saying:

“Mr. Clerk, enter it as the judgment of this court that Mr. Chastain Cocke shall pay a fine of one dollar and be imprisoned for the space of one minute in the county jail. And, Mr. Clerk, enter upon the minutes that in the deliberate judgment of this court, I am not fit to be a judge.”

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My uncle bowed to the decision, and moved off toward the sheriff to submit himself to arrest. But the "body of the county," represented by the citizens there assembled, were not so submissively minded. Chastain Cocke was their senator in the State Legislature. He was a Whig, and both the county and the senatorial district were strongly Democratic. But that never made any difference when Chastain Cocke announced himself as a candidate for either house of the Legislature. He was always elected by a majority that sent party divisions out of sight, and he might have been elected to Congress in the same way, had he seen in Congress any opportunity to serve his constituents well.

Court day always brought the whole "body of the county" to the county seat, and when it was noised abroad that Chastain Cocke was in controversy with the court all the citizenry that could gain entrance forced their way into the court room. When sen-

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tence was pronounced, they all precipitately left the building and assembled on the green outside. When the sheriff came out with his prisoner, whom he was commanded to incarcerate for the space of one minute, he found his way toward the jail obstructed by a mob that included all the best citizens of the county, and practically all other able-bodied dwellers in that political division.

These men clamorously insisted that their honored fellow-citizen should not be taken to the jail. In the enforcement of their prohibition they had armed themselves with guns, axes, crowbars and whatever else they could secure in the way of offensive or defensive weapons.

Seeing the situation, my uncle asked the sheriff for a box on which he might stand to address the mob. Securing that elevated position he made an impassioned appeal to the populace. He begged them to let the law take its course. He reminded them that, as their senator, he was himself a law-

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giver, and that it would be a peculiar shame to him if the law should be defied and overridden in his behalf. He explained to them that the judge was absolutely right, except that he ought to have imposed a severer penalty. He assured them that, in submitting to the prescribed imprisonment of one minute, he should feel no humiliation or disgrace. He earnestly begged his fellow citizens to let the sheriff carry out his orders in vindication of the majesty of the law.

It was all to no purpose. The people's mind was made up. No sooner had he stepped down from his goods-box platform than one of the oldest and most honored men of that community mounted it. With his thin but long gray locks floating in the wind, and the bare top of his head exposed to the glaring sun, the old man seemed like an angel of authority as he lifted his spare and tremulous hand to command silence. When the hush came, the old man, with his hand still raised to heaven, said:

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"Thou, God, seest us! Thou only can search hearts and judge them." Then turning to the sea of uplifted faces all about him, he said: "Fellow citizens:—*Resolved*, That Chastain Cocke shall never be imprisoned for one second in any jail of which this community is the owner. Those in favor of that resolution say aye!"

It was needless, but he added: "If any are opposed they will say no!"

Then turning to the sheriff he said:

"Mr. Sheriff, you have heard the unanimous verdict of this community. That verdict, as you very well know, is final and irrevocable."

There was nothing for the sheriff to do but return to the court and report that he had been prevented "by force of arms" from executing the decree of imprisonment. Thereupon the judge said:

"The court regards the detention of the prisoner for several minutes in the custody of the sheriff as the full equivalent of

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the imprisonment ordered. Mr. Clerk, call the cases on the calendar."*

These incidents are related here in detail in order to show under what influences Edward Eggleston fell at this peculiarly receptive period of his life. Mr. Chastain Cocke was exceptional in his ability and in the courage with which he confronted duty; but his principles, his theories of conduct, were only such as all the better class of men in that community at that time accepted and acted upon. Our father's brother at the old homestead, and our cousin who represented another branch of the family at Egglestetton, obeyed the same law of honorable obligation quite as unquestioningly as he did. So did all the better men of Virginia with whom Edward was at this time brought into close relations, and the influence of such men upon

*I have already made use of this incident in a novel, transferring it to another time and calling the actors in it by fictitious names. But surely, as more than half a century has passed since the occurrence, and after everybody concerned in it has passed away, there can be no reason why I should not tell the story in its nakedness without disguise or concealment, except such as is involved in the suppression of the offender's name.—AUTHOR.

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his character and his point of view, was untellably important as a formative influence.

In his earlier boyhood the only appeal made to him had been to a sense of religious obligation to act for the safety of his own soul. He was now taught that there were obligations altogether independent of religious duty, obligations of mere manhood and self-respect, that must be fulfilled even if it should be demonstrated that there was no God in the Universe, no judgment day, and no future life of rewards and punishments. Here was a new thought and a mightily uplifting one—the thought, namely, that every man owes it to himself to maintain a certain standard of conduct, quite irrespective of his responsibility to the Deity or to any other tribunal than that of self-respect and conscience and honor. Not in fear of punishment, not in dread of a day of judgment, not upon any selfish or cowardly account, but solely as a matter of self-respect, of soul-cleanliness, one must meet his obliga-

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tions unflinchingly and discharge them in utter disregard of cost or of personal consequences of any kind. That was the new gospel that Edward learned in Virginia, and, as he afterwards said, no boy ever stood more pressingly in need of such a lesson for the correction of the false and futile teachings of his earlier life.

Under the former teaching no man was expected to be scrupulous in the performance of duty unless he "professed religion" and held himself subject to the requirements of a formulated creed. Under the new teaching Edward learned that conduct—which Matthew Arnold truly says is "two-thirds of life"—is wholly independent of religious belief and that obligation rests upon a sense of right and wrong altogether apart from any theological belief or any scheme of rewards and punishments.

Still another influence to which Edward Eggleston was subjected at this time was that of Mr. William H. Harrison, school-

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master at the Wigwam. This was for more than a generation a noted boarding-school for boys, as wholesome in its influences as the Gunnery in Connecticut was. The master of it was a man of great ability, great learning and a character as white and clean as that of any child. Edward quickly learned to love Mr. Harrison, and Mr. Harrison quickly learned to love Edward. The two not only worked together in the orderly course of school employments, but they came presently to think together, to discuss together those larger questions of life and conduct which lie beyond and above school work.

The half year that Edward spent under Mr. Harrison's tuition was the last of his school life. He had made himself master of Latin, French and mathematics as few college graduates of that time ever did, and he had laid a secure foundation in Greek, upon which he afterwards built, after his custom, by a course of self-directed study. Up to this time he had owed comparatively



THE HANGING ROCK, NEAR MADISON, INDIANA
A favorite haunt of Edward Eggleston from boyhood to old age

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little to schoolmasters. He never afterwards increased that debt.

One other thing. In the old Virginian houses which were his homes at this time, there were always well-stocked libraries. These included next to nothing of strictly modern literature, but they were rich in all the classics of our language, and Edward diligently read them through, as I did in my turn a little later. It used to be said of him afterwards that he could never be tempted to change his quarters and pay a prolonged visit in any house until he had read clear through the library of the house he was in.

I think the glamour of that easy-going, restful and exquisitely self-poised Virginian life did not appeal to Edward at all so strongly as it did to me when a year or two later I was brought into contact with it. To me it was the complete realization of romance, the actual embodiment of poetry, a dream life of exquisite perfection. It was a hundred years behind the times, but for that

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very reason it fascinated my mind as nothing else has done, before or since. It violated all the maxims of prudence that had lain at the basis of my education, but I was overjoyed to be rid of allegiance to these. It ran counter to all I had learned of strenuousness, but I was weary of strenuousness, and I welcomed the restfulness of this dreamy life of perfect peace. It was not so with Edward. He believed, with intense sincerity, in a life of endeavor, of action, of absolute earnestness. The idleness of the Virginian life was grateful enough to him as a sort of vacation, but as a life to be led indefinitely it offended his sense of human obligation, and he could in no wise reconcile himself to it as a permanent mode of existence.

More important still, that life was founded upon slavery, and Edward's mind revolted against slavery with an antagonism that nothing could overcome or weaken.

In Virginia, of course, he saw the insti-

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tution in its least offensive and most pleasing aspect. Slavery there was almost purely patriarchal in its character. The relatives and friends with whom he associated had inherited their servants—for they never spoke of them as slaves—precisely as they had inherited their acres and their family traditions and their family debts, and all the rest of it. They treated the relation of master and servant as one of mutual obligation. They strongly felt their responsibility for the welfare of their black dependents. They never thought of buying or selling negroes. It was not even respectable to do so, except in the case of a criminal negro, who must either be “sold off south” or sent to the State prison. The negroes in Virginia at that time were, without question, better compensated for their labor than any other laboring class has ever been anywhere on earth. Not only were they the best housed, the best clothed and the best fed of laborers, but they were secure of tender care in infancy, in illness and in

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old age, as no other laboring people ever were before or since.

Thus slavery presented its most attractive side to the Hoosier boy's mind. But it was slavery, nevertheless, and he would none of it. Instead of being won by its pleasing patriarchal presentment, he was repelled actively where before his sentiment of hostility to the institution had been mainly sentimental and passive.

Edward was not a fanatic on this subject, though he felt strongly concerning it. He did not make himself offensive in discussing the matter, as so many people at that time thought it their duty to do. He did not thrust his opinions upon those about him, but he stoutly held and did not conceal them.

In all this he found much of sympathy in Virginia. The better class of Virginians of that time lamented slavery as an inherited curse of which they would gladly have rid themselves if they had known how. They

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felt, as Thomas Jefferson had felt, a strong desire to set the negroes free; but they saw, as he did, that it would not do to "arm these people with freedom and a dagger;" that to set them free without providing them with some means of earning a living, would be to inflict a curse upon them and to set society on its head, as it were. It was in fear of this that Virginian law forbade the freeing of negro slaves within the State. So many of the Virginians of that time were soul-weary of the institution that but for such laws a considerable proportion of the negroes would have been set free by act of their owners, or by provisions like those that John Randolph had written into his will. In the past many Virginians had done this by way of freeing themselves and their children from the incubus of slavery. Conspicuous among these had been Virginia's great chancellor, George Wythe, who, inheriting a large estate, actually impoverished himself in setting free the negroes that had come to him

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from his fathers, and in providing them with the means of earning a livelihood. Many scores of other Virginians had taken their negroes to the West and settled them on little farms there, at cost of impoverishment to themselves. John Letcher, the governor of Virginia during the Civil War, had for years openly advocated the abolition of slavery, not so much for the sake of the negroes as for the salvation of the young white men of Virginia from influences which he regarded as evil. Despairing of general emancipation, he proposed and stoutly advocated the division of the State, and the erection of its western half into a free State. His abolitionism was the chief factor in making him governor.

The desire for emancipation at the time of Edward's stay in Virginia, was very general. But there were insuperable obstacles in the way of the realization of that desire. The planter who wished to free his slaves must take them beyond the borders of the

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State and there provide them with little farms. In the greater number of cases this was impossible. There was an hereditary debt upon almost every plantation, and the land, without the negroes, would not sell for enough to cover that debt and pay the expense of the deportation of the blacks.

It was a time of relentless anti-slavery agitation at the north, and the southern people, including those who most earnestly desired emancipation, bitterly resented what they believed to be an unjust and unwarranted interference with their domestic affairs on the part of people not concerned with them. They looked upon such agitation as an impertinence that gravely threatened their wives and children with all the horrors of a servile war. But for a rational, intellectual and moral condemnation of the system, such as Edward Eggleston freely avowed, they had no resentment and no word of censure. It commanded their sympathy rather than their hostility.


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But it forbade Edward to avail himself of an opportunity. Our childless uncle wished to adopt him and educate him, first at the University of Virginia, and afterwards at one of the great German seats of learning. But eager as the boy was for precisely such educational opportunities, his conscience impelled him to decline the offer, on the ground that it would make of him the beneficiary of slave labor, a sharer in the profits of a system which he regarded as morally wrong.

Having come to this decision, the boy felt himself bound to return to his native State, Indiana, and he did so, thus making a final end of his schooling, which might otherwise have included a course at the University of Virginia and some years of study at Heidelberg or Jena.

CHAPTER XI.

Some Revelations of Character.

URING Edward's stay in Virginia the family was removed again to Madison, chiefly because I had been sent there so that I might attend the High School—the Vevay schools offering no further opportunities for me, now that Mrs. Dumont was compelled by increasing years and by ill health to give up teaching.

I remember an occurrence soon after Edward's return from Virginia, which illustrates his self-sacrificing character, and which is, therefore, worth relating. I had always been a notable swimmer, and to me swimming seemed scarcely more difficult as an art than walking. One evening Edward and I went to the river for a bath. We pushed out from shore and continued on our course

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till we neared the middle of the river. Then suddenly Edward said to me :

“Geordie, I’m exhausted. I must sink here and drown. Don’t try to save me. That would only involve you, too, in my drowning. Leave me here and swim ashore if you have strength.”

I do not think I ever knew anything more heroic than that, though afterwards I had an experience of four years of strenuous war, abounding in heroic deeds. I was impressed by his calm courage, and touched by his impulse of self-sacrifice. But I laughed aloud at the foolishness of his proposal. I had swum five times across that river without touching bottom, and I could have swum ten times or twenty times across it with scarcely an effort. The little space of a quarter mile or so that lay between us and the shore seemed to me ridiculously of no consequence. Laughing and jeering for my brother’s encouragement, I commanded him to place his hands on my shoulders, and

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he did so, all unwillingly, lest he imperil my life by what he deemed an overtaking of my strength. I swam ashore with him as easily as I might have walked a block and laid him on the sands to rest and recover his breath. When that was done I asked him:

“What sort of a brother do you take me for, anyhow? Did you seriously think I would leave you to drown out there in the river, and make no effort to save you?”

I saw that he was weeping, so I said no more in my bantering way. Presently he recovered himself and said to me, taking my hand:

“Geordie, it was God who taught you how to swim like that.”

My theology has always been badly crippled, but in that moment I rejoiced that God or long practice had given me a skill in swimming sufficient to save my brother's life.

It was soon after this that Edward organized a little club of us boys, called the “XII,”

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for the reason that it was our purpose to limit the membership to twelve persons. Edward had been reading the autobiography of Benjamin Franklin, and in the formation of our club he had had the Junta in mind.

The club never reached its membership limit in our time, at least, though I believe it still exists, with somewhat changed purposes and a much larger membership than that at first contemplated. It was a secret society, and like most other associations of the kind, its secrets were few and of no consequence. It had its passwords and its hailing signs, and all the rest of the semi-masonic equipment. For curiosity's sake, I practiced the old hailing signs in the streets of Madison in 1900, and received ready responses from the younger generation of XII's who still preserve the organization.

Our meeting place when the little society was formed, was Edward's room and mine, in East Street. The purpose of the society was self-improvement by debate, essay

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writing, the systematic reading of books, and especially conversation. As an illustration of the prejudice of that time I may relate that after a hot debate we refused to admit one boy to the club solely because he was a Roman Catholic in religion. Obviously our narrow-mindedness needed all of enlightenment that we sought in organizing the XII. Half a century later Edward remembered this incident with regret and humiliation. "What a lot of young bigots we were," he said to me one day at Lake George, "when we voted to exclude George Griffin on account of his religion! We've all outgrown that since, but I can't forget that we were once capable of such prejudice." Then, after a pause, he added:

"We ought, all of us, to be immortal, Geordie; we shall need an eternity in which to repent of our errors."

About this time there arose the question of my education beyond what the schools of Madison could give me. Our mother, out-

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of her scant possessions, had many years before contributed one hundred dollars to the endowment of the Indiana Asbury University, at Greencastle, and had become possessed, in return, of a perpetual scholarship in that institution. This scholarship entitled her to send one student to the University free of all charge for tuition. I had gone as far as the High School in Madison could take me in the direction of a liberal education. But then, as now, the High School course was completely out of accord with college requirements. In mathematics I was fully equipped to enter the Junior class at college. In certain other studies, notably chemistry and physics, I was fit to pass the Senior examination for graduation. But I knew almost no Latin and no Greek. The Greek did not so greatly matter, as the colleges at that time were accustomed to regard that language as a "lame duck," to be brought up after entrance. But I must know enough of Latin to read at sight, to conjugate the

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principal verbs, to decline the nouns and adjectives, and to convert simple English sentences into correct Latin.

A sudden ambition had seized me to "go to college," as the phrase went. Indeed there was nowhere else for me to go, there being no school in Madison which offered any advance upon the curriculum that I had mastered. But I was wholly unprepared, so far as the Latin requirement was concerned, and the case seemed hopeless—to everybody except Edward. He had used himself to the performance of astonishing things in the way of study, and he was in no way appalled by the false magnitude given by the curriculums to requirements of study. He had often himself done in a week or two what the schools set down as a year's work, and he saw no reason why I should not do the same, particularly as my gift of quick acquisition was marked, while my memory was positively phenomenal in its readiness and its tenacity. Indeed the ease with which

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I learned whatever I was set to learn, had up to this time been the chief obstacle in the way of my education. I had never in my life studied diligently, for the simple reason that I had never found it necessary to do so in order to keep up with my classes. Edward knew this, and he reckoned with it as the chief factor in the situation. He went to our mother with the proposal that I should enter college at the beginning of the term—two or three weeks away. Our mother pointed out my lack of instruction in Latin.

“I know all that,” Edward said. “But I’ll take care of that. If you consent to his going to college, I will undertake to prepare him for his examinations.”

Edward was at that time not yet eighteen years of age, but the maturity of his wisdom was such that everybody about him looked up to him as to a counsellor whose words were weighty far beyond those of any other. I think our mother hearkened to them with quite all the submissiveness that she had ever

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shown to the injunctions of our father, whom she had revered with the utmost devotion that a loving wife can feel.

Having gained our mother's consent, Edward came to me.

"Now, Geordie," he said, "you have never studied in your life. You have always stood at the head of your classes when you chose to do so, but usually you haven't cared for that. Now, for the first time in your life, you are going to work in earnest. You are going to learn in two weeks all the Latin that the schools teach in two years. You can do it, and I am going to *make* you do it. You shall enter college with flying colors, but in order to do so you've got to work in a way that you never did before."

I was eager for this thing, and I welcomed the work. Our breakfast was served at eight o'clock. At six every morning Edward waked me. He allowed me precisely twenty minutes for a cold bath and for dressing. That left one hour and forty min-

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utes for paradigms, and not until I could recite them perfectly did he allow me to go to breakfast. After the morning meal he allowed me half an hour for exercise—which consisted of sawing and splitting wood and milking the cow. Then he held me to my Latin again until the noon-day meal. And after dinner he made me “buckle down to study,” as he phrased it, until supper time. After supper he permitted me to go swimming, but at eight o'clock he had me at work again over my Latin, and he kept me at it until eleven. Then I went to bed and to sleep.

Eight days of this accomplished the purpose. At the end of that time I knew all the principal paradigms, could read any ordinary Latin at sight, and could translate any simple English sentence into fairly correct Latin.

Then Edward called a halt. There were still seven days ahead of me before I must offer myself for my entrance examinations.

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But, wise teacher that he was, Edward decreed that these seven days should be given to rest and recreation. "The only thing that I'm afraid of," he said, "is that your nerves may play you a trick after this debauch of study. So you and I are going to spend the next seven days in the woods out yonder on the hills. You aren't even to think of Latin until the time of your examination arrives."

Then we went away to the hills, and for a week we gathered trilobites and otherwise interested ourselves in that study of geology which some of the preachers of that ignorant time tried in vain to forbid to us as a "Godless science."

The region around Madison was geologically rich in an extreme degree, and thanks to the stupidity of engineering at the time when our railroad was built, the hills in rear of us had been cut through with a great gash a hundred and fifty or two hundred feet deep, where now a tunnel would take the place of the cut. The

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geological formation tempted us, and both Edward and I were sufficiently self-instructed in geology to take advantage of our opportunities. Edward had read to me "The Old Red Sandstone" and "The Testimony of the Rocks" and the "Vestiges of Creation," and together we had studied the best of the school geologies of that time. Better still—though we did not then know how much better it was—we had passed many months of delightful days among our native hills, trying to find out for ourselves what nature had written in the rocks and trees and plant life for our instruction as to the purposes and methods of creation. We had questioned God as to his ordering of the Universe, reverently seeking an answer, but in doing so we had offended against the theological zeitgeist. Then, as now, then as always since ever the foundations of the world were laid, theology claimed for itself a close monopoly of truth. It held facts to be heretical in so far as they

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might seem to contradict dogmas. It sought to set limits to human inquiry and to impose restraints upon thought.

To me these things made little difference. I was born a skeptic, a doubter, an inquirer. There was a hole in my head, I think, at that point where the phrenologists locate the bump of veneration. I had been born with an eager desire to know, and in the gratification of that desire I had never in the least cared whether a fact found out squared itself with any theory or flatly contradicted it. My attitude of mind, though I did not then know it, was purely scientific.

Not so Edward's. He was still under strong bonds to theology, and in his modesty of mind he had not yet realized his own intellectual superiority to those half educated "pastors and masters" who sought at this time to bind his soul with shackles.

A strenuous effort was made by those pastors and masters to stop Edward and me from the study of geology. The only effect

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of this upon me was to stimulate further and more fearless study. "The preachers," I said to Edward, "are afraid of science. Why? Isn't it because the facts contradict their teachings and their theories? I confess I don't know, but I am going to find out if I can."

Then Edward underwent a period of sore wrestling over his obligations toward my soul, which entity, if it exists, I gravely fear was never worthy of his concern for its welfare. After thinking the matter out, he came to me one day and said something like this:

"After all, we know that God calls these men to preach; presumably he inspires them with impulses of what to preach. We are mere boys. Have we a right to think for ourselves in opposition to what these divinely commissioned teachers tell us is the truth?"

For answer I said:

"Are they—all of them—called to preach? Are they—all of them—divinely

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inspired as to their teaching? I saw one of them at camp meeting, the other day, fall into a foolish passion because the points of his only standing collar didn't coincide on the two sides of his mouth. He had been appointed to preach that afternoon and he had his sermon ready, but he gave it up and lied about it, saying he was ill, and let somebody else preach in his stead, simply because he couldn't get that collar right. Was that man God-commissioned to preach? Or was he collar-commissioned not to do so, because there was a girl out there in the audience whom he wanted to marry?"

Edward was at this time reading Theodore Parker and William Ellery Channing and Emerson, and his mind was opening in a way that sadly distressed the ministers who were watching his development with a foreshadowing that its course did not tend to orthodoxy and that this gifted boy was destined to become a power in the world—perhaps a power dangerous to their dominance.

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During his sojourn in Virginia Edward had been brought for a time into intimate personal relations with Dr. Josiah Clark Nott, the author of "Types of Mankind," "Indigenous Races of the Earth," and other learned works in Ethnology. The strangely old boy of 17 or 18, and the strangely young thinker of fifty odd, had become inseparable companions, and Edward had learned from Dr. Nott the primary lesson of science—absolute fearlessness of thought and inquiry. These two—the man sorely stricken in health and feeble far beyond his years, and the eager-minded boy—spent days and nights together, often sitting up in converse until morning broke upon them. From that association Edward had brought away much of the scientific spirit, and he now haltingly and timidly applied it as he and I wandered over the hills about Madison, and studied nature at first hand in that wonderful railroad cut—of which I do not know the like for geological opportunity anywhere.

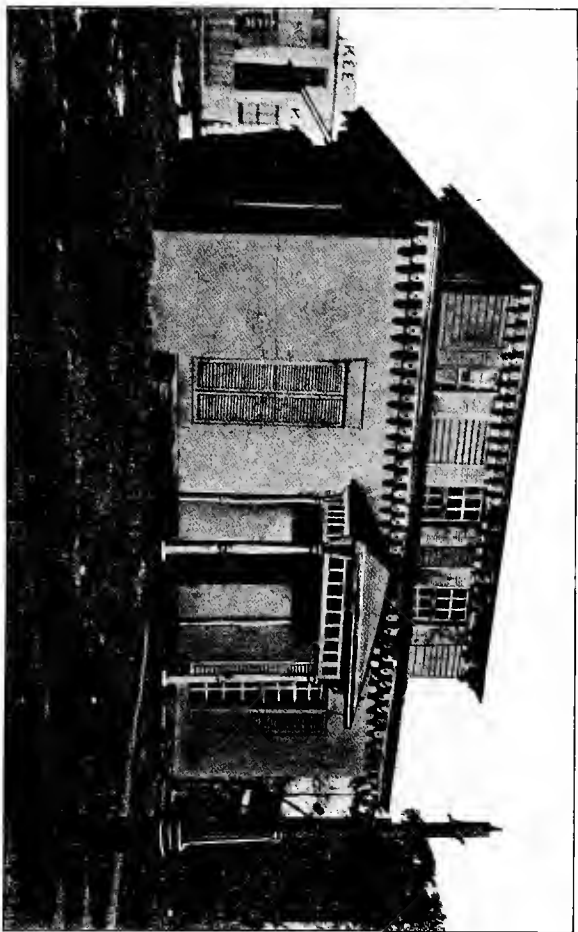
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I shall never forget a seance that my brother and I had about that time with the Presiding Elder of our district. The good old man was sorely troubled about us, and especially about our geological studies. He explained to us that geology was a science which "sought to leave God out of the story of creation," and when Edward ventured to suggest that Bishop Upshur's chronology was not inspired, and might possibly be wrong, the dear, devout old gentleman met the plea with a proposal of "earnest prayer for the salvation of a young soul from the labyrinth of pseudo-scientific doubt." I remember his phrase all the more accurately for the reason that at the time I had only the vaguest possible notion of what it meant, and also because he did not include my soul as an entity worth praying for. The old gentleman prayed over Edward very earnestly, and he tearfully urged us to give up our pursuit of what he called "that godless and infidel science."

T h e F i r s t o f T h e H o o s i e r s

For three days our little geological hammers remained idle. Then we visited McCormack and got new light.

McCormack was a somewhat out-of-the-way personage, who dwelt in Madison and had a singularly miscellaneous workshop and laboratory there. He bore the reputation of being half-crazy—a reputation chiefly based, I now think, upon the fact that he knew more and thought more freely and more daringly than it was at that time permitted to men to know and to think. He was an inventor. He had constructed a device of air-pumps and the like, that enabled him to walk upon ceilings, and he had gone all the way round the world giving exhibitions of ceiling-walking. He had brought back with him enough money to satisfy all his needs, and he was now devoting himself to scientific and mechanical research. Edward and I were accustomed to spend many hours in this queerly constituted person's workshop, sometimes helping him in his work, sometimes



EDWARD EGGLESTON'S HOUSE IN EVANSTON, ILLINOIS. (Now destroyed.)

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doing work of our own there—which we were always welcome to do—and sometimes merely listening to McCormack's talk. Among other things he had a complete series of Indiana rock specimens, each carefully dressed in such fashion as best to show its formation and structure. "I think God made these rocks," he said to us one day. "Some people don't seem to think so. Anyhow, it can do you boys no harm to find out how they were made."

Then we got out our hammers and went geologizing again, and one day, as we stood together in the Great Rock railroad cut, Edward said:

"Geordie, I can't help thinking we do right to study this. Anyhow, the rocks haven't any interest to tell us lies."

"And they make no mistakes," I answered.

"No; but we may make mistakes in interpreting them," he said.

"I don't think that ought to stand in

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our way," I replied. "If we are so afraid of misunderstanding that we dare not try to understand at all—well, Edward, the fact seems to me to be this: some people who know very little have set themselves up as knowing—"

"Please, Geordie, don't! That thought has been trying to undermine my faith, and it has very nearly succeeded."

"Your faith in what?" I asked. "Surely your faith in God needn't suffer because you suspect incapacity on the part of those who perhaps unwarrantably assume to be his authorized interpreters."

Edward made no answer then. Forty years later he picked up a trilobite one day, and said to me:

"Do you remember how hard it once was for me to distinguish between truth and the teachings that assumed authority—between the teachings of God and those of men who professed to know his ways and his purposes?"

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"Yes," I answered. "I remember. You then called a trilobite an antediluvian creature. You would hardly give the Noah's ark story that much credit now."

"No," he answered, "and yet nine-tenths of the American people believe that story even now, nine-tenths of them believe in miracles, and really suppose that the world is only six thousand years old, that Adam and Eve were historical personages and all the rest of it. It will be a hundred years and more before the average American citizen finds out even those things that are the commonplaces of thought to all educated men. Only the other day I read a very labored book, whose author, a devout Kentucky clergyman, sought to prove that negroes are pre-Adamites and have no souls."

"He sent it to you?" I asked.

"Yes, with a request for my opinion, as usual."

"What did you say to him?"

"I said I thought he must be right in

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believing that negroes have no souls, inasmuch as there is absolutely no reason to think that negroes have any advantage over white men in that respect."

In tracing the influences that helped to develop the mind of a man like Edward Eggleston, it seems to me equally a duty to set forth those influences that stood in the way. It is for this reason that parts of this chapter are written.

CHAPTER XII.

The Hoosier Schoolmaster's Theory and Practice of Teaching.



IT is a curious fact that the author of "The Hoosier Schoolmaster" was never a schoolmaster at all. About the time of which these chapters treat, Edward Eggleston did indeed apply for a first-class teacher's license under the Indiana school laws. He easily passed the examination, secured the license and was appointed to the principalship of a school in the suburbs of Madison. Then he set himself to work on Greek and within two weeks had so broken down his health by overstudy that he was obliged to resign his appointment and go off again in search of health.

That, I believe, was his only experience in teaching, at least in any formal way. But he was always a teacher and a source of in-

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spiration. One of his pupils at that school, who is now a person of prominence, said to me at the Authors Club, not long ago, pointing to Edward's portrait by Wiles:

"That man taught me how to study, and, better still, why to study. To him I owe it that I am educated."

I shall never forget how he followed up my Latin preparation for college.

"Now Geordie," he said, "they reckon Greek a lame duck, and they make provision for it. But it is a lame duck sort of provision, and I don't want you to have anything to do with it. They have a preparatory Greek course, under an adjunct professor. He gives you a part of a paradigm to learn each day—the present tense of the indicative mood to-day, and the imperfect to-morrow. Don't have anything to do with that class. Simply say you will be prepared in two weeks to pass your entrance examinations in Greek, and then set to work to prepare yourself precisely as you have done in Latin. Remem-

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ber that a mastery of the paradigms is everything. Find some fellow just as lame in Greek as you are and get him to join you. If it costs you more by a dollar or two a week to room with him, don't let that stand in the way. I am earning that much as a grocery clerk, and I'll pay the difference. You and he should shut yourselves up in your room during every hour that college requirements leave free, and continually prod each other with Greek conjugations. The 'lesson' prescribed by the professor for the first day will be the present, active, indicative of Tupto. Instead of that you must both of you learn the whole conjugation of that verb before you go to your breakfast sausages, and then, before you present yourselves at your first lecture, you must perfectly know how to conjugate the irregular verb erkomai from start to finish. If you and your workfellow work half as well in your Greek as you have done with me in Latin, before the two weeks are over you'll

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know how to decline every Greek noun and adjective and how to conjugate every regular and nearly every irregular Greek verb, and in doing that you'll acquire vocabulary enough to enable you not only to pass your entrance examinations without any thanks to your adjunct professor's laborious teachings, but to take the lead in your class. But one thing more I want you and that other fellow to do. I have written out a vocabulary for you to learn. It includes between 300 and 400 words, with their primary meanings. I want you to commit it absolutely to memory, so that whenever and wherever any one of those words may occur you'll know what it means—in a general way at least."

I had not dreamed that Edward knew so much of Greek. He had never had a lesson in that language in his life, but I found his method of study the very best I ever knew. Afterwards, when it became necessary for me to earn my own college expenses by tutoring some boys during vaca-

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tion, for their entrance examinations, I followed the same plan with satisfactory results. I gravely wonder to-day that no teacher in our secondary schools has ever hit upon a like method. Perhaps other and more conventional methods are easier to the teacher—as they certainly are to the pupil who doesn't want to study very hard. Perhaps—well it doesn't matter. I only know that by the methods devised by the mainly self-educated boy, Edward Eggleston, I learned in eight days to read simple Latin at sight, and in two weeks to read easy Greek in the same way, to conjugate nearly every verb, regular and irregular, to decline every noun and adjective, and to turn simple English sentences into approximately correct Greek, almost without effort.

I sometimes wonder if there ought not to be a divine call to teach, as there is supposed to be a divine call to preach. Certainly Edward Eggleston, at the age of less than eighteen, knew better how to teach

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Latin and Greek than do the most skilful teachers in our most pretentious preparatory schools to-day. Our boys spend several years, at an expense of half a thousand dollars a year, in learning what Edward Eggleston, while still under eighteen years of age, taught in a week or two to a not exceptionally bright pupil.

Let me record it here as my well-considered conviction, that if there were any means of selection among the pupils of our great preparatory schools, one year's tuition would be ample, instead of the four years now given to High School work, to prepare the best quarter of their number for college or for the undertaking of professional study. Our schools are at present organized on the basis of the capacity and the willingness of the duller three-fourths. That other fourth—the one that is alone really worth considering, the one that is alone worthy to enter college or a professional school—is crippled and practiced in indolence from beginning to

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end, by having the incapacities of its duller classmates set up as the standard and measure of its achievement. Why isn't there a school in all our land in which a really bright and earnest boy can prepare himself for college or for professional study in one year instead of four? And why isn't there a college in which a boy of real capacity is permitted to master the four years' course in one year or two, as any boy of real capacity and industry easily might?

The fundamental defect lies in tradition, but it is reflected also in the teaching. To the youth who is really taught the higher algebra, all the rest of mathematics follows as a matter of course; and a few weeks, or at most a few months, of competent teaching would enable him to complete that part of his course. To the youth who knows his paradigms and is master of a reasonable vocabulary in Greek or Latin, a very few months at most should suffice for all needed preparation for final examinations.

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Unhappily our educational system is founded upon different conceptions. Our courses of study are marked out for the duller rather than the brighter pupils. They are arranged with far greater reference to the ease and comfort than to the earnest work of professors and tutors.

Is there any profession in the world in which men do so little for their money as in that of teaching? The schoolmaster gives five or six hours a day to his work during five days in the week—a total of 25 or 30 hours a week. What other profession lets one off so easily? Then, too, the schoolmaster has a world of holidays that no other professional man enjoys. All his Saturdays and Sundays are his own for rest. Labor day, election day, Thanksgiving, Christmas, New Year's, Washington's birthday, Lincoln's birthday, Decoration day and the Fourth of July are free days to him. In addition, he has a vacation at Christmas, another at Easter, and one of three months

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or longer in the summer. What lawyer, doctor, clergyman, newspaper writer or man of letters, commands or expects such leisure? And it is all paid for by the parents of boys and girls who must be educated. If teachers would work as continuously, as industriously, and as intelligently as men of all other professions do and must do, the academic course could be completely mastered within a year, or two years at most, and a year or a year and a half of earnest work would amply suffice for the mastery of any college curriculum appointed in this country.

This is saying nothing whatever with respect to the needless and time-wasteful expansion of the curriculum. Granting that everything required is desirable—and it is a large granting—an earnest student under an earnest teacher ought to master the school course in two years at most, and the college course in two years more. A really bright boy, if his teacher knows how to teach, should be able to do it within half that time.

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Daniel Webster was graduated from college at 19 years of age; Edward Everett at 17, and the other great men of our land at about the same age. To-day the requirements are such that the student who enters college must be a year or two older than these men were when they left it with their degrees. Is this an advance in education or the reverse—a gain or a loss? Is it desirable that the boy shall spend the first twenty-five years of his life in preparation for a problematical twenty-five years more of activity? Are we not making a fetich of mere scholarship? Are we not giving an excessive period of youth to mere acquirement, both by wasting the time appointed for acquirement, and by exacting a needless amount of acquirement? Bearing in mind the facts that life is short and that the object of education is so to train the mind as to get its best results in active ways, is not our entire educational system wrong at both ends? Does it not require more of mere acquirement than is

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actually needful, and does not the indolence of teachers exact a larger expenditure of time than is really necessary for such acquirement?

These are questions which we must seriously think about if we really care for the future of our country and of mankind. There is a professional impulse on the part of those who teach, to exact more and more of those who learn. It is a natural impulse, and, properly directed, a wholesome one. But is it not capable of abuse, and is it not in fact abused? Is not mere scholarship unduly exalted in our time, and does not achievement pay the penalty? Was not a Daniel Webster graduated at 19, an Edward Everett at 17, worth more to the world than Daniel Webster and Edward Everett graduated at twenty-five with vastly more of mere learning, would have been?


For specialists in scholarship of course there can be no limit set to needful acquirements; but for the men who are to do the

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world's great work in one or another department of active endeavor, it seems easily possible to exact too much, and to waste needless years in preparation that does not prepare. Still more obvious is it that diligence in teaching and the use of enlightened methods might greatly shorten the period of preparation, no matter what the requirements may be.

CHAPTER XIII.

A Pair of Young Tramps.

URING this time, after Edward's return from Virginia, he and I began, or rather resumed, a course of tramping that had a most beneficial effect upon his health.

Before and after he "chucked me into college," as he boyishly described the performance, we accustomed ourselves, in my vacation times, to prolonged walks, sometimes extending over several weeks of time. If there was anything to be seen, anywhere within pedestrian reach, we went to see it, adopting the most primitive travel methods, and enduring very cheerfully all the hardships incident to such methods. We slept in hay mows, or under straw stacks, or, upon occasion, in fence corners. We sometimes got a breakfast or a dinner at some hospita-

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ble farmer's house, where our tender of money in payment—for we always carried a little money and never failed to offer pay for our food and lodging—was usually rejected with that scorn which the Western farmer at that time felt for the man who would “charge” for a meal or a night's lodging. In the main, however, we ate corn bread and bacon from our pockets.

On these journeys Edward reduced everything to system, after his habitual manner. He had a big bull's-eye silver watch, which kept good enough time for all our purposes, and by it he regulated our trampings. We would set out in the morning to cover a prescribed distance. Edward would mark off the miles into relays and estimate very carefully how long it should take us to cover each subdivision of the distance. It was his usual practice to reduce our periods of walking to fifteen minutes each, with one minute's rest at the end of each quarter hour, and three minutes' rest at the end of

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each hour. But country miles are apt to be erratic in their length, and so sometimes we were delayed much longer on our road than we had expected, while sometimes instead we would arrive at our destination some hours earlier than we had planned. These things were never suffered to interfere with our program. If we got to our night's destination before the time appointed that meant an extra period of rest. If we were half an hour or an hour late, we accepted that as proof that the country people had mistaken the length of their miles. In either case we were a happy and contented pair of boys.

About that time Bayard Taylor published in a newspaper a series of articles concerning the Mammoth Cave in Kentucky, which he had recently visited. I don't know how we happened to get hold of those fascinating papers, but we did so, and straightway the impulse seized us to visit that wonder of nature.

With three or four pounds of bacon and

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two pones of corn-bread to the good, we set out on our journey. A few miles below Madison we got two fence rails, attached our clothing to the further ends of them, and swam the river. That night we slept in a barn. The next morning we were arrested, charged with aiding or planning to aid in the escape of a runaway negro who had disappeared, but of whose existence we had never heard. As the negro was presently found in a barn in a state of helpless intoxication, we boys were promptly discharged, but with a warning that Hoosiers were not wanted south of the river. A boat was placed at our service, in which we recrossed the stream, and after that we walked back to Madison, compelled to take Bayard Taylor's word for the existence of the Mammoth Cave, and for all its wonders.

But, in brooding over the matter, I became dissatisfied with this solution of the problem. I do not think I cared particularly for the Mammoth Cave, but it was my habit

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of mind to resent and resist any balking of my purposes, whatever they might be, by the arbitrary will of others. It seemed to me that to go to the Mammoth Cave had become an imperative duty which Edward and I owed to our own self-respect. I happened to know that a well-to-do neighbor of ours was just then getting in his year's supply of wood, so early in the morning I went to him and took the contract to saw, split and cord up his wood for a certain price per cord. I had sawed and split and corded wood all my life as a contribution of service to the domestic economy of our household, but never before had I done so for money. I was gravely apprehensive that if the present state of facts should become known in the family some form of prohibition would be interposed. So I kept the matter secret. By this and some other work that I secured, and by the sale of such school text-books as I had done with, I secured, altogether, the sum of six dollars and seventy-five cents.

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With so much money in hand, I went to Edward and announced that he and I were going upon our contemplated travels. Fifty cents apiece paid our deck passage to Louisville on a steamboat. There we bought crackers, smoked herrings and cheese, and, thus provisioned, we set out to walk the few miles that lay between the city and the cave.

The great cavern was a disappointment to us. Perhaps we lacked something of that creative imagination with which Bayard Taylor had seen and described it. At any rate, we felt rather ill-repaid for our journey, particularly as Edward managed to lose the remainder of our money before we got back to Louisville, so that we had to tramp the extra fifty miles or so of our homeward journey from that city to Madison.

All this occurred before the time when Edward undertook to prepare me for my college examinations. It is related here as a part of what the lawyers call the *res gestæ* of Edward Eggleston's youth.

CHAPTER XIV.

The Wander Year.

N the spring of 1856 Edward's health broke down completely. He had hemorrhages, supposed to be from the lungs, and the decision of the doctors was that he was doomed to die presently of consumption.

Our mother took him on a voyage to St. Louis—in the hope that the journey might restore his health. It did nothing to promise recovery or even betterment, but on the way the boy fell in with a number of other people afflicted as he was, who were going to Minnesota—at that time the new land of promise for consumptives.

He made up his mind to go thither also. Our mother could barely and with difficulty furnish him with passage money up the river, but he bravely undertook to look out for

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himself after he should land in Minnesota, and, with very little hope for health, as he wrote me at the time, he set out.

He used to relate that on the way up the river the captain of his steamboat, who was commodore of the line, took sufficient interest in him to give him advice.

"Now, some o' these fellers," he said, "has got only a little o' your trouble, an' mebbe the climate o' Minnesota will help 'em to live on for a few months or a year or so. But you've got it too bad for that. Take á fool's advice an' go right back home, so's you can pick out the place you want to be buried in. If you ain't got money enough for that, I kin arrange for passes. But the one thing fer you to do is to go home jest as quick as you kin."

Years afterward Edward had occasion to travel frequently on this old captain's steamboat and the two became devoted friends—the one being a Methodist preacher and the other a bluff steamboat man who, for lack

of an adequate supply of other adjectives, sprinkled an entirely meaningless profanity through his sentences. Edward, throughout his life objected, on principle, to all "dead-heading" of the clergy, and to all "discounts" made to preachers on the ground of their calling. He insisted that these practices constituted a pauperizing of the clergy, and would himself have none of it. He even wrote humorously on the subject years afterward in the *Century Magazine*, ridiculing such "dead-heading" with caustic contempt, and insisting that a clergyman owed it to his own self-respect to pay his way like any other citizen. But he never succeeded in paying his passage on any boat of the line which this old captain owned and controlled. When he raised the point of principle in a controversy over the matter one day, the captain replied:

"Well, now, it's been my rule all my life never to charge fare to a corpse, an' you're a corpse, though you don't look like

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one. The first time you traveled with me I tole you you hadn't more'n a month to live. Well, that month's gone many a month ago, an' so you're dead or else I'm a liar, an' I never yet allowed even a preacher to call me that. You can't never pay no fare on no steamboat that I own without callin' me a liar, so that's the end of that."

"And think of it," Edward said to me one day long after the old captain had been gathered to his fathers, "at that time I was deeply apprehensive for the future welfare of that dear old man's soul, just as if God didn't know what stuff men are made of."

Edward landed in Minnesota—then a new territory just beginning its settlement—in May, 1856. He was a mere boy of 18 years. He was absolutely without acquaintance there and absolutely penniless. In the search for bread-winning work he must match his frail physique against the robustness of hundreds of stalwart youths who had gone west to conquer fortunes for them-

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selves. The contest was an unequal one, but the frail boy's "grit" stood him in good stead, and its recognition on the part of the gloriously brave "frontier conquerors," as he loved to call them, was ready and generous.

He did whatever work there was to do. He became chain carrier to a surveying party, and with his readiness in learning, he quickly picked up a knowledge of the art and science of surveying, which later enabled him to take command of a surveying party on his own account. But, his health failing again, he had to abandon that employment and go to bed for a time.

At one time he became the driver of three yoke of oxen hitched to a prairie breaking plow. At another time he took the agency for a soap-making recipe and peddled it over the county. When taunted with this experience in after and more distinguished years his reply was ready:

"It was the best soap recipe I ever saw,

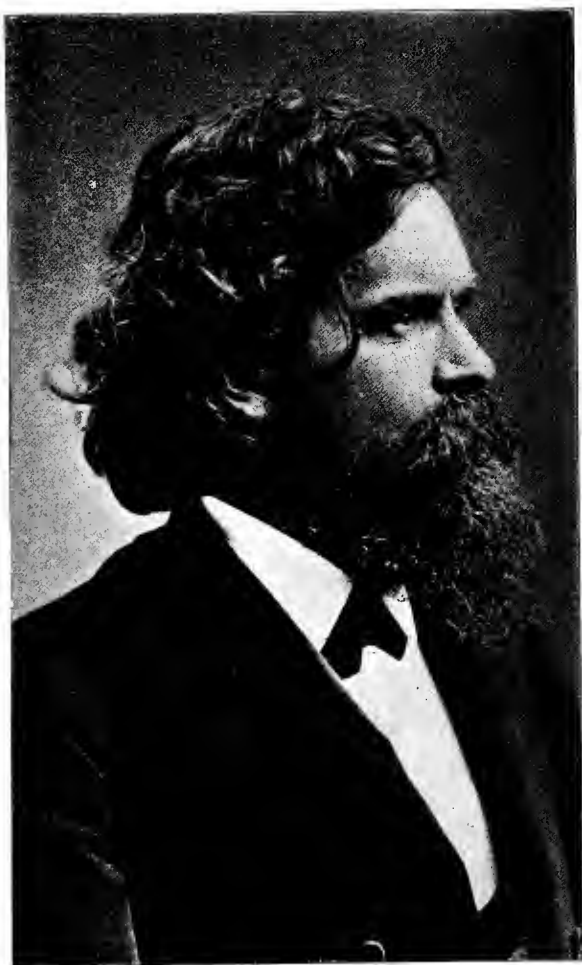
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and soap was a good deal needed in that country. I am prouder of my soap recipe selling than I am of my preaching there; for the soap was above criticism, while the sermons certainly were not."

He engaged in other occupations also, by way of earning a living, both at this time of his first stay in the far northwest, and during his later career as a preacher there, when frequently failing health obliged him, now and again, to give up his pastorates and engage in other work. Of these occupations he used afterwards to say: "Some of them may have been undignified, but they were all honest—and they brought me a living when I had need of it."

Was it not in that spirit that this great, free nation of ours was built up in a wilderness in which the gospel of work played a larger part than any more abstruse teaching could have done?

After a few months of outdoor life, the boy's health was so far improved that he



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determined to return to his home and resume his studies with a view to that ministry of the gospel to which he looked forward as his appointed career. He had earned enough by hard work on the prairies to feed and clothe himself there, but he had no surplus money with which to pay his way home. So he wrote to me, asking me to send him thirty dollars out of his share in our slender estate.

I sent him the money by express, in the form of thirty silver dollars.

But mails were slow in those days, and his letter had been long in coming. A day or two after I had sent off the money Edward himself appeared—travel worn but in better health than I had ever seen him.

He had a stirring story to tell. After writing me the letter asking for money for his home-coming, he had been seized with a sudden enthusiasm to bear a part in behalf of freedom in the bloody struggle then going on in Kansas. So, without waiting to

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receive the money for which he had written to me, he had strapped a knapsack upon his back and set out to walk from Minnesota to Kansas. His path being hopelessly blocked in Iowa, he turned about and decided to make his way homeward, well-nigh penniless and on foot, across a country which at that time was almost wholly without inhabitants. For three hundred and sixty-five miles he traveled across desert wastes, living upon such food as he could here and there find, sleeping upon the prairie under the stars and among the wolves, and often going without water for more than a day at a time.

Finally, he had reached a railroad, and found that by the expenditure of two dollars more than he had in possession he could pay his fare to Lafayette, Indiana, where a step brother lived. Not having the two dollars he laid the case before an entire stranger, of a disposition so kindly that he willingly advanced the money. To return it promptly was Edward's first concern on

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reaching home, and in aid of that purpose I undertook to tutor a stupid and rather disagreeable boy through his coming first term in college, taking him as my room-mate in spite of his disagreeableness, on condition that he would make advance payment of the two dollars which alone I was to get for seeing to it that he should pass his examinations at the end of the next and now approaching term. We had relatives in the town who would gladly have furnished the money, or it might somehow have been squeezed out of the sadly embarrassed estate, but I preferred to secure it by my own exertions, as an expression of my joy in having my brother back again as my comrade.

The comradeship was not to be for long. I must almost immediately return to college, and Edward was fixed in his determination to secure a preacher's license and begin his career as a Methodist circuit rider. Until this time he had cherished the hope of taking a college course, but repeated experi-

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ment in close application to study had finally convinced him that this was impossible, that he must live in the open air during the greater part of his waking hours, and that whatever of study he might attempt must be done in full recognition of this necessity.

He was not yet nineteen years old, but his mind was mature far beyond his years, as it always had been. He was already and very greatly the superior in education of most of the young Methodist preachers of that time, and of most of the college graduates, too, for that matter, if in education we include travel, experience, and the educative influence of a varied contact with men. Why, then, should he not begin his work without further delay?

That question was promptly answered. The church authorities were glad to ordain him, and he was eagerly ready for work. He was assigned to a circuit in extreme southeastern Indiana, as its junior minister, with ten different preaching appointments.

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For six months he "rode circuit," spending the greater part of his days on horseback and eating and sleeping wherever he might be invited to eat and sleep among the hill people.

This life gave him few opportunities for reading or study, for in those days when "the preacher" came to any house it was expected that he should hold prayers with the family, gently lecture and admonish the children, and make himself agreeable as the centre of a local society of which every member was invited to breakfast, dine, sup or spend the evening in his supposedly uplifting company. There was no seclusion, no privacy for him in any house. More than half the time he was expected to occupy the same room and even the same bed with the boys of the family. Nowhere was he free from converse that contributed not at all to his culture or to his intellectual growth. To "entertain the preacher" meant not only to provide him with lodging and meals, but

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also to keep his mind continually occupied with an entirely unimproving conversation which consumed his time to no purpose.

To meet these conditions Edward adopted a plan of his own, of which he wrote to me at college, in gleeful exultation. He had been bred to expert horsemanship from his earliest infancy, and could both ride and control the least tractable of horses. But he wanted time and opportunity for reading and study, so he wrote to me:

"I have bought a good, strong, and very lazy horse, without enough spirit in him to think of going at any gait faster than a walk unless whipped or spurred into involuntary exertion of a strictly temporary character. The distance between 'appointments' is considerable, and with such a horse I have abundant excuse for starting early and arriving late. By taking all day to make journeys that might easily be accomplished in a few hours, I get all day instead of a few hours for my study. I throw the reins on my

horse's neck and let him jog on at his favorite speed of two or three miles an hour. Then I get out a book and devote my time to profitable reading or study. As I cannot carry my Greek or Latin dictionaries with me, I must do without them. But I find that to be not altogether a disadvantage. It compels me to *think* for my vocabulary, and to study context in a way that I should never do if I had a dictionary at hand. I have just finished reading the *Oedipus Tyrannis* in this way, and while the lack of lexicon reference has doubtless cost me some of the niceties of scholarship, I am not sure that the loss hasn't been more than made good by increased fluency, and by the compulsion of the memory to retain what it has once grasped in the way of word meanings. Sometimes I encounter a word the meaning of which I cannot in any wise make out. But presently I encounter it again in a different connection, where the context serves instead of a dictionary. Then I go back to the former

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passage and read it in the new light. I wonder if it might not be possible to teach at least the dead languages in that way, after the declensions and conjugations were learned. And I am not sure that it wouldn't be the best way in the end, at least so far as intellectual discipline is concerned."

He himself afterward applied this method to the learning of other languages with conspicuous success. Knowing his Greek, Latin and French pretty well to begin with, he decided in his own mind that whenever he should have need to read any passage in any language, he could and would do it; and to the end of his days he did precisely that, often to the great advantage of his studies in historical research.

But at this time of his early circuit riding, he did not confine himself wholly or even chiefly to scholarly study. He read voluminously, mainly in lines that were suggested by his profession. He read Wesley and Whitfield and Thomas à Kempis. But he found

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time also to read a world of history and biography—particularly biography which, he always contended, was “history cut in thick slices.” He read everything, in fact, upon which his preternaturally eager mind could lay hands, and, youth-like, he was specially attracted to poetry of an uplifting sort. Such poetry he sometimes used in his sermons, as he did also the more inspiring passages of Scripture.

“The practice is dangerous, however,” he wrote to me, “in this hill country. Not long ago I quoted a part of the twenty-third Psalm, not thinking it necessary to mention its source. A few days later a good brother said to me: ‘That was a mighty pretty part of your sermon about green pastures and still waters and all that. But why don’t you preach that way all the time?’ Alas, I had not only made myself a plagiarist of King David, but had set up the choicest utterances of the sweet singer of Israel as a standard of rhetoric for myself.”

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Notwithstanding the out of door life of a circuit rider, Edward studied himself into illness again within six months and had to abandon the work. After a few months of rest at home, he turned his face again toward Minnesota, where alone, since his infancy, he had enjoyed that measure of health which permits a man to take his working part in life.

CHAPTER XV.

The Story of "The Hoosier Schoolmaster."

BETWEEN the time of Edward's return from his first stay in Minnesota and that of his second journey thither, I had some experiences of my own which mightily interested and amused my brother. These experiences are to be very briefly related here, partly because they reflect what still survived of the "Hoosier" life in the hill country, very near to the higher civilization along the river, but still more because Edward's amused recollection of what I told him about them at the time, prompted him many years afterwards to write "The Hoosier Schoolmaster."

Soon after the beginning of my second year in college a controversy arose between the faculty and the student body, in which I thought then and I think now that the stu-

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dents were absolutely right and the faculty altogether wrong. But the faculty were in authority and threatened the suspension of all the students, with expulsion quickly to follow, if we should persist in our refusal to accept the harsh and wholly unjust terms offered to us. We persisted and all of us, except forty-one who submitted at the last moment, were sent home. In justice to the students thus dismissed, many of whom have since won high places for themselves as men of character and brains, it should be stated here that the Board of Trustees, after hearing both sides of the matter, decided that the students were right, and ordered their readmission to their classes without conditions of any kind. At the same time the Board asked the president and certain members of the faculty for their resignations.

I did not avail myself of the reinstatement, for the reason that I had, in the meanwhile, accepted charge of a school on Riker's

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Ridge, a few miles from Madison, in the hill country. The neighborhood was at that time the most primitive one in all that region, though it lay so close to the chief city of southern Indiana. The people there were partly Pennsylvania Dutch, partly Hoosiers. They were very good and kindly people, as I remember them, but scantily educated and still somewhat disposed to cling to the old school tradition of "no lickin' no larnin'," which is emphasized as an axiom in "The Hoosier Schoolmaster." The advent, therefore, of a schoolmaster still under seventeen years of age, to manage a school in which the majority of the pupils were his seniors, was looked upon with doubt and well-founded apprehension. The fact that I was a college student, and that my education was vastly superior to that of any one in the neighborhood, was readily recognized.

"But how's that boy ever agoin' to manage sich a school as ours?" they asked.

"Why, they's a dozen boys in that

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school any one of 'em able to lick him with their right hands tied behind 'em."

That was true enough. It was true, also, that one of the big boys had won distinction by "licking" the last three masters. He was the original of Bud Means in "The Hoosier Schoolmaster," though rather gentler of disposition than Bud was. Still he had always cherished the conviction that the schoolmaster is the natural enemy of the big boy, an enemy to be "licked" upon the smallest provocation. It was confidently predicted, therefore, by the trustees of the school, and by the school itself, and by all the neighbors, that "school won't be a week old before Charley G—— will give the master a lickin'."

Curiously enough it was only through Charley G——'s willing assistance that I was able to govern the unruly school at all. Charley was a young man of twenty-one, six feet high, and as powerful almost as a young bull, which animal indeed he resembled in

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perfect symmetry of form and perfect command of his muscles. He was not only able to "lick" me or any other master that the school might get; he could "lick" any boy in the school with no apparent effort whatever, and every boy there knew the fact, some of them by bitter experience.

But Charley was two years older now than he had been when he drove the last schoolmaster out of the neighborhood. Manhood had come to him, and with it ambition. He had decided to become a ship carpenter, and in his preliminary investigations regarding the opportunities that trade offered to a young man engaging in it, he had shrewdly observed two facts: first, that the men who became "boss" ship carpenters, or even sub-bosses, were only those who had learned certain mathematics that lay far beyond the arithmetic; secondly, that sub-bosses were paid twice or thrice the wages of ordinary hands, while boss ship carpenters usually grew well-to-do and lived in fine houses.

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So, when the boy-master came to the school—the first master he had ever had who could teach algebra, geometry and trigonometry, the ambitious young man felt that his opportunity had come. He came to me by night—or rather asked me to go to him—after the first day of school—during which, as he afterwards told me, he had carefully “sized me up” as to good fellowship and teaching capacity—and laid his ambitions before me. He told me what mathematics he must learn in order to equip himself for his chosen career, and asked me, with eyes eagerly scanning mine for the real answer, whether I thought it possible for him to master so much during the months for which I had been appointed to the school.

I asked in return how much he knew of arithmetic which, I explained to him, was the foundation of the mathematical superstructure he wished to build. For answer he said simply:

“Try me, and find out for yourself.”

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It was ten o'clock at night, and I was, by invitation, staying over night in his father's house, where nine o'clock was the customary bedtime for everybody. So I answered :

"I'll examine you in arithmetic to-morrow."

"No, do it now, please," he said. "I'm ready for all night and I can't sleep till I know about it. You see the old man gives me this six months of schooling, and he'll never give me any more. So I want to know, just as quick as possible, what I can do."

Seeing the young man's eagerness for education, and sympathizing with it, I set to work at once to test his knowledge of arithmetic. Before midnight I told him he was prepared to go forward, and added :

"I can teach you all you need of algebra, geometry and trigonometry, within the next six months, if you aid me by trying very hard to learn. I'll gladly do my part. The rest depends upon you."

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He promised, and that was our compact. Nothing whatever had been said about school government, or the maintenance of order, but I soon learned by observation that Charley G—— had thought out all that. He wanted to learn; I was to teach him; he did not intend that any school trouble should interfere with that program. A day or two later a boy tried to disturb the school by drawing his pencil over his slate so as to make it squeak in a nerve-distressing way. I rebuked him. Presently he did it again, and I again admonished him. Five minutes later he ventured upon a third offence. Before I could decide what to do, Charley G—— rose quickly, crossed the aisle, seized the offender's ear and vigorously twisted it till the fellow writhed in pain.

"You heard the master," was all he said.

If a thunderbolt had entered the school-room there could not have been greater astonishment. Charley G—— on the side of the master! And even helping him main-

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tain discipline and order! It was unbelievable. But further proof of it came quickly. There was a little fellow—the smallest in the school—whose quaint ways were very endearing. His name was Ebenezer Ledgerwood, but he was called "Needy." There was a hulking, cowardly brute there, whose one employment on the playground seemed to be to persecute the peculiarly inoffensive and lovable child. I inflicted severe punishments of my own devising by way of stopping this brutality of persecution. The more I punished the more the hulking brute persecuted the helpless little fellow.

Finally, I put aside all my prejudices against corporal punishment, and gave the big fellow a thrashing with a stout gad, promising him a worse one if he should repeat the offence. That day at the noon recess the fellow set to work to "take it out" of Needy Ledgerwood. I was looking and hearing through a window blind. Charley G—— was at the bat in a game of town-ball.

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He threw down the bat, seized the persecutor, and, seating himself on one of several bundles of shingles that had been left lying around when the new school-house was finished, turned the fellow across his lap, holding him by the nape of his neck and pinioning his legs by throwing one of his own across them. Then he called for shingles, and they were quickly brought by boys who were accustomed to do Charley G——'s bidding. These shingles, one after another, he wore out as implements of spanking, until a dozen or more of them were gone. And that the spanking was effective was abundantly proved by the howls of pain it called forth from the victim. Finally, Charley G—— stood the fellow up, slapped his jaws with a vigor that suggested the possibility of broken bones, and then releasing him, said:

“Now take a hint from that. I'll do you up a great deal wuss next time. And don't you go whining to the master about

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this. If you do, it'll be a good deal wuss for you. I'm a takin' this here job off the master's hands."

Screened by a Venetian blind, I had seen and heard all that had happened. But I thought it best to let well enough alone, so I gave no sign then or afterwards that I knew anything about it. But I had no further occasion to exercise discipline over the boys of that school. They quite understood that Charley G—— was "a takin' this here job off the master's hands," and they ordered their conduct accordingly.

The girls were my only problem. They, of course, had no fear of Charley G——'s big fists, and they were disposed to defy me. In order to govern them I took a leaf out of Mrs. Dumont's book. I put them on their honor. I explained to them that of course I should never think of punishing a girl. That would be unworthy of my manhood. But I added that I trusted them to behave as girls should who expected to be "ladies"

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after a while. I frankly declared that if they should break every rule and disobey every command, my instinct of courtesy toward them, as girls and young women, would forbid me to attempt any sort of control.

This was a new view to their minds, and for a time they doubted my sincerity. They tested it by disobeying, in small annoying ways, but finding that no angry outbreak on my part followed, they at last settled down to the belief that I meant what I had said, and finding no "fun" in baiting a teacher who had trusted them to do as they pleased, they ceased to trouble me. I think that a sense of honor and a sort of public opinion in the school helped a good deal in securing this result. It was felt to be "mean" to disobey the teacher when he had declared that no punishment of any kind should be meted out to the disobedient, and each girl was conscious of the fact that her schoolmates, boys and girls alike, would so regard her conduct in such a case.

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Much that was humorous occurred in the conduct of the school, particularly the odd doings and sayings of "Needy" Ledgerwood, who afterwards served Edward as a model in his portraiture of Shocky in "The Hoosier Schoolmaster."

All these things I related to Edward on my weekly visits to Madison, for I usually went home on Friday afternoon and returned on Monday morning in time for school. Sometimes, however, I remained at Riker's Ridge over Saturday, in order to help Charley G——, who was working night and day over his mathematics. He worked so well and with so much intelligence that before the period of my school teaching ended, he had quite fully accomplished his ambition and was ready to enter upon the learning of his trade in full confidence that he knew enough of the mathematics to warrant his hope of some day becoming a master shipwright. I hope he achieved that ambition, though I have never heard. I bear him in friendly

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remembrance, not only because of the way in which he helped me to govern an unruly school, but still more because of the sturdy manliness of his character, and the unfaltering friendship he manifested for me.

Let me skip over the years here in order to show what things of vastly more importance grew out of this school-teacher experience of my own.

Late in 1871 Edward resigned from the editorship of the *Independent*, and presently undertook the not very hopeful task of galvanizing a moribund weekly periodical, *Hearth and Home*, into new life. That paper had been established by the advertising firm of Pettingill & Bates, with Donald G. Mitchell and Harriet Beecher Stowe as its editors, and that most gifted of juvenile writers, Mrs. Mary Mapes Dodge, or Mary E. Dodge as she then wrote the name, in charge of the children's department. The publication had been a failure almost from the beginning, partly perhaps because Mr.

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Mitchell and Mrs. Stowe knew little or nothing of the art of editing a newspaper, while Mrs. Dodge, the only one of the trio who had a genius for such work, held a subordinate instead of a controlling position.

But apart from that *Hearth and Home* was foredoomed to failure because of a misdirected purpose. It was meant to be a country gentleman's periodical, while at that time there were almost no country gentlemen—in the sense in which the term is here used—in America. It addressed itself largely to a class which at that time scarcely at all existed, though it is fairly numerous now—the leisure class that amuses itself with expensive horticulture for pleasure only, rejoices in greenhouses and gardens of exotic plants, and dallies with amateur botany in the same spirit in which it indulges a taste for literature by reading the best magazines.

The mistake was soon made manifest by the failure of the periodical to repay the lavish expenditures of its publishers, and

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presently it was sold to Orange, Judd & Co., publishers of the *American Agriculturist*. Of the original editors only Mrs. Dodge remained in its service, and I think it entirely just to say that it was only the exceeding charm of the children's department which she made, that had enabled the paper to retain the few thousands of circulation which it had when Edward Eggleston took editorial control of it.

I was appointed managing editor under him, not by his request, for he detested nepotism, and the appointment was not one that I needed or desired, but by voluntary act of the publishers, who thought my presence as his lieutenant would free his mind of many worries and perhaps in other ways aid him in the difficult task of rescuing the paper from its slough of despond.

That task was one of very great perplexity. "First of all," I remember saying to Edward, "we must find out what is the matter with the paper."

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He quickly answered :

" Oh, I know what's the matter. With the exception of Mrs. Dodge's admirable children's pages, all that is is wrong. Write that up in your hat, Geordie, for ready reference. We must change everything radically—everything but the children's pages. There is the horticultural department now. It occupies several pages that might be better used in other ways. I want you to kill it, not by a blow, for that would break the hearts of the publishers and shock some subscribers, perhaps, but kill it by slow suffocation. In rearranging the make-up I want you to put that horticultural section between two sections devoted to better things; then I want you to expand each of those two sections so as to squeeze the horticulture more and more each week till nothing is left of it except perhaps a picture of a new rhododendron or chrysanthemum, with a paragraph of descriptive text. In the agricultural department, I wish you would do all you can to

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discourage the portraits of plows that now stand for pictures there, and in the household department, please do the like with skillets, frying pans and patent egg-beaters. But all this is a work of negation and elimination. We must do some constructive work at once. We must get some literature for the paper, with good names attached. I've already engaged (here he named a number of popular writers) to furnish matter, and you must be constantly on the lookout for others. You must get some good, interesting descriptive articles that will lend themselves to really artistic illustration, and then you must yourself select the artists to illustrate them. The art superintendent—well, never mind that, choose the artists yourself.

“Now another thing. We are going to print some stories in this paper, and I want you to get some good ones—single number, short stories mainly, but if you strike a really good three-number story, take it. There'll be a howl from the publishing office, of



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From a photograph made in the Century Club, New York, 1896

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course, because one of the publishers has always taken 'high moral ground'—or high immoral ground, whichever it is—against all novels and stories. Of course we must put stories into the paper, not only for the sake of its success, but because the story is the most effective of all literary forms in teaching truth, conveying interesting information and uplifting men's minds and souls. I sometimes think the day is coming when pretty nearly all of instruction and all of inspiring thought will be given in the story form, as they once were in the form of verse. Anyhow, we must have some good short stories at once, and presently perhaps we shall print a novel as a serial."

It will scarcely be believed of many in the early years of the twentieth century, that so late as the end of the third quarter of the nineteenth, there still survived a bitter prejudice against novels as demoralizing literature, and that even short stories were looked upon with doubt and suspicion. Yet even in 1902

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—thirty years after that time—a very distinguished clergyman in New Jersey, within half an hour's ride of New York, was bitterly assailed by members of his church, who sought his removal from the pastorate for the sole offence of having done some noble literary work, including a novel or two. The case made such a stir that the metropolitan newspapers gave columns to an account of it, and to the discussion of it which followed.

To us who were grown men in the early seventies, the lapse of time seems very short between those years and these, but in fact it covers about a third of a century of constant intellectual broadening. If there still are some in the twentieth century who deem novel writing a grave breach of clerical ethics, shall we feel wonder that thirty odd years ago there were many who frowned upon fiction as a thing of immoral tendency, while a little earlier still, novel reading was earnestly denounced from many pulpits, and

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usually classed with Sabbath-breaking and sometimes even with blasphemy?

It was only a few weeks later, and while we were still wrestling with the problem of how to lift *Hearth and Home* out of the mire of stagnation, when one evening about ten o'clock, Edward came to my house full of enthusiasm over a project he had formed.

"Geordie," he began at once, "I am going to write a three-number story, founded upon your experiences at Riker's Ridge, and call it 'The Hoosier Schoolmaster.'"

Then he set forth his theory of art—that the artist, whether with pen or brush, who would do his best work, must choose his subjects from the life that he knows. He cited the Dutch painters, and justified his choice of what seemed an unliterary theme, involving rude characters and a strange dialect perversion, by reference to Lowell's success with the Biglow papers.

He had no notion, at the outset, of making more than a three-number story of

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"The Hoosier Schoolmaster," and he wrote the first instalment of it with very little, if any, notion of what was to follow. But that first instalment achieved instant and astonishing success. I think I never knew a piece of work to be so quickly talked about. Newsstand sales increased at once, and new subscriptions began to burden every mail. Many newspapers in the West asked and secured permission to copy the story, publishing each instalment two weeks after its appearance in *Hearth and Home*. It was deemed good advertising policy to give such permission freely, and it proved to be so.

Before writing the second instalment the author changed his plan, enlarging it. Instead of a three-number story, he decided to let the tale take its own course so far as length was concerned. From beginning to end he wrote the story with the printers close at his heels, each instalment appearing in print before the next was written, and sometimes before it was begun.

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Ordinarily this would be an unwise and even an unsafe way of producing a story, but in this case it proved quite otherwise, chiefly perhaps because the author knew his subject so well and was in love with it.

He had only once before attempted fiction for grown people, and that only in the form of a short magazine story. How that attempt came to be made is best told in a letter recently written to me by Dr. Richard Watson Gilder, editor of the *Century Magazine*. At the time to which the letter refers Dr. Gilder was Dr. Holland's chief editorial assistant in the conduct of *Scribner's Monthly*, now the *Century Magazine*, and Edward Eggleston was an editor of the *Independent*, and a contributor of critical articles to *Scribner's Monthly*.

Dr. Gilder writes :

"By the way, I remember, as if it were yesterday, the Friday on which I went to the *Independent* office and told Edward that I would stop in on the following Monday and get from him a Thanksgiving story. He said : ' But I have never written stories for grown up people.' I said, simply,

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'Monday morning I'll be here,' and when I called on Monday morning he handed me the manuscript of 'Huldah, the Help.' This was an immediate success. We were not so particular then about allowing articles to be copied, and this must have appeared in a hundred newspapers. Its success, I think, was a large element in his decision to write fiction for adults. I had never seen any child stories of his, but the geniality of his literary criticisms, which we were publishing in the magazine, convinced me that he had it in him to write stories."

Dr. Gilder's judgment in a matter of that kind was that of an expert, as his remarkable success in the conduct of his magazine, and especially in the discovery of new writers of capacity and new themes for magazine use, has since abundantly proved. But he was at that time a rather young man, enthusiastic, optimistic perhaps, and Edward's intimate friend. These facts prompted Edward to take Mr. Gilder's judgment with a good deal of allowance and to hesitate before attempting to follow up the success achieved by "Huldah, the Help," with other ventures in fiction.

"That success is not conclusive," he said to me one day when I referred to it as con-

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vincing. "It may have been accidental—a lucky hit, a thing that happened to satisfy a passing fancy. I may be a man of one story—they say every man has one story in him."

But to Mr. Gilder's urgency and mine there was presently added another, which he regarded with a profounder deference, namely that of Charles F. Briggs—the "Harry Franco" to whom Lowell had dedicated "The Fable for Critics." Mr. Briggs was at that time an old man, but his faculties were still unimpaired. He had at one time been famous as a novelist and critic. He had ceased to write novels, and only now and then wrote a short story. But his critical acumen was never so great or his critical judgment so sound as at the time of which I am writing.

Referring to "Huldah" and its success, Mr. Briggs told Edward very earnestly that he *must* write novels. Edward replied that he had no confidence in his fitness to undertake anything so ambitious, particularly as

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"Huldah" was absolutely the only bit of fiction for adults he had ever ventured upon.

"Nonsense," replied Mr. Briggs, in his pleasantly dogmatic way. "Nonsense! Any man who can write stories for children can write novels successfully."

Edward often afterwards said that it was this very positive judgment of the veteran writer which led him to think seriously of novel-writing as a possible career for himself, and when the occasion for writing "The Hoosier Schoolmaster" arose, his mind was so well used to the idea that he felt no shrinking from the task.

The success of "The Hoosier Schoolmaster" in winning circulation to *Hearth and Home* was so great and so immediate, that the publishers besought its author to go on writing stories of Western life, and he did so, leaving the work of editing to his managing editor, and after awhile surrendering his post of editor entirely, leaving me to succeed him. All that will be recorded later

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in this volume. At present we have to do only with "The Hoosier Schoolmaster."

When the serial publication was ended it was decided to bring the story out in book form. But an unwise economy in the publication office forbade its proper presentation. It had been "set" in brevier type for the newspaper—a type much too small for book use, but it was decided to save the cost of resetting, or a part of it, by "overrunning" the lines—that is, transferring the type from one line to another in order to make the lines long enough for book page use. The saving was trifling, and the result of it was that the volume was a thin, uncomely one, with smaller type than is fit for use in a book.

In spite of this parsimonious treatment, however, the popularity of the book was phenomenal, its sales running up to fifty thousand copies in a few months, and continuing year after year. A year or two ago a new edition was made, with good paper, proper type and better illustrations than

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those used before, and in this worthier dress the book continues to sell like a new and popular novel, nearly a third of a century after its first publication. It has been translated into Dutch, Danish, French and German, and a large pirated edition has been sold in England.

Such is the story of "The Hoosier Schoolmaster." It is proper to explain, however, that while the original impulse to write it grew out of my boyish experiences as a schoolmaster on Riker's Ridge, the story is indebted to those experiences for nothing more than that vague suggestion, but is altogether an original creation. Riker's Ridge was not Flat Creek, nor did it in any important way resemble Flat Creek. Charley G—— and Needy Ledgerwood did in some remote degree suggest Bud Means and Shocky, as Edward always believed, but in neither case is the resemblance close enough to suggest the most distant portraiture or even a close drawing from a model.

CHAPTER XVI.

The Minnesota Preacher.



AT the time of Edward Eggleston's return to Minnesota, a great horde of young men from all parts of the Union were hurrying thither. Their purpose was to make a living and possibly to achieve fortune. The only fortune he sought was the privilege of living, the ability to go on breathing in spite of the condition of his lungs. Beyond that he had no hope or expectation, no desire, even, except to do well and faithfully the work in the world to which he believed that God had called him. To that end he at this time made a great renunciation. From boyhood the itch of writing had been strong upon him, and during the six months of his ministry in southern Indiana his writings, chiefly for the denominational newspapers, had attracted

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wide attention by their vigor of utterance and their shrewd insight into the moving impulses of human nature. His ambition to become a writer was greatly encouraged by the plaudits of his elders, whom he modestly regarded as his betters, as well as by the approval of readers unknown to him personally. But the thought of "consecration" was dominant in his soul. It was a doctrine much insisted upon, in theory at least, among the Methodist clergy at that time, and Edward was disposed to apply it in practice, as he always applied every conviction of duty to the conduct of life. He had somewhere read the story of a young Catholic monk, whose artistic gift was so great that his ecclesiastical superior, discovering it, strenuously sought to drive him back to the world, offering to secure his absolution from all his vows, and commanding him to quit the cloister and exercise the great gifts that God had bestowed upon him. The struggle in the young monk's soul was

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a terrible one, but at last, according to the legend, his conscience conquered. He destroyed his pictures, burned his brushes, emptied his paint tubes, and resolutely put ambition behind him as a temptation of the devil.

Without for a moment believing himself to be possessed of literary genius, Edward Eggleston had definitely found out that he could write acceptably for print, and the ambition to do so was strong within him. He believed it to be a temptation of the devil, designed to impair his "consecration," and to win his soul away from God.

This view was very generally held at that time and for long afterward. When "The Hoosier Schoolmaster" was in the heyday of its popularity, one of Edward's former mentors, an old clergyman of high intelligence and considerable culture, wrote to him in admiration of the book, but ended by admonishing him as earnestly as Wolsey did Cromwell to "fling away ambition."

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"The literary life," he wrote, "is tempting you, I fear, to your destruction. In your very success I scent danger for your soul. These things lead away from God. No man can serve two masters. I question if true consecration is compatible with the literary work you are doing."

This conviction of the necessity of consecration had been strong in Edward's mind during youth and early manhood, and it had exercised a decisive influence upon his career at many points. His extraordinary subjection to his own conscience—a subjection which endured to the end of his life—led him in youth to govern himself resolutely by teachings which most others accepted in theory, but with far less disposition to interpret them literally or to apply them rigidly to personal conduct. Long before "The Hoosier Schoolmaster" was written Edward had learned to interpret his own duty, not less conscientiously indeed, but with a broader understanding of what his duty was, so that

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in doing his work as a writer he felt no fear that he was going wrong. But during his early ministry this matter sorely troubled him. He not only restrained the impulse to write, but when, upon occasion, he produced literary work that he thought worthy, he became alarmed over the pleasure he felt in it, and resolutely destroyed his manuscript.

"It was just as well so," he used to say in later life.

"The world lost nothing by the destruction of those manuscripts, and neither did I. Possibly both the world and I would have profited if I had destroyed many others that I have published instead."

I was not personally brought into contact with the life in Minnesota at that time, and I cannot presume to describe it. Nor is it necessary that I should, as Edward's own vivid impressions of it are recorded or reflected in the novel entitled "The Mystery of Metropolisville."

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In addition to the young men who at that time went to Minnesota Territory to win fortunes by work and to "grow up with the country," there was a great company of speculators there who wooed fortune in less laborious ways, by starting what we have since learned to call "boom towns" and reaping a great harvest of wealth from land speculation. These mapped out paper cities with pretentious names, put forth alluring prospectuses, and sold corner lots out on the unbroken prairie at fabulous prices to over-confiding new comers.

A little while earlier the total population of that entire region had been less than 100,000 souls. At the rate of immigration then prevailing it was confidently predicted that Minnesota would become a populous State within an incredibly brief time. It was as easy as reciting the multiplication table or the alphabet, to show the new comer how certainly vast wealth must be his within a year or two if he had sense enough to invest

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what money he had in lots in this or that projected "city," for the present covered with prairie grass, but destined almost immediately to rival St. Louis and Chicago in population, wealth and business.

Some of these projectors of "cities" were honest visionaries, deluded by their own imaginings; but the greater number of them were mere gamblers upon the credulity of others. Their projects were greatly aided by the operations of another class of speculators who were busily projecting railroads in every direction, and so vehemently promising the early construction of those highways of commerce that they often got high prices for the merest "tips" as to the course which a projected railroad was to follow, or a confidential hint as to where a "junction" was to be located and the prairie-grass city become a great railroad centre.

Behind all this speculation and serving it as a foundation was the undoubted fact that Minnesota's soil and climate were par-

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ticularly well adapted to wheat growing on a magnificent scale, and that her other undeveloped resources were many and great. It was certain now that the territory must speedily become a State, and that its agriculture was destined soon to make the State rich. It was easy to exaggerate all this, and it was exaggerated by the speculators to such an extent that, if all their confident prophecies had been fulfilled, Minnesota would today be the most populous and the wealthiest State in the Union. To the unwary at that time the speedy winning of great riches seemed to depend only upon foresight in choosing the right place in which to invest in lots that already bore ridiculously high prices. To such foresight the projectors were always ready to help the new comer by nods and winks and confidential "tips."

Curiously enough, as Edward Eggleston used often to point out, in the midst of a vast and universal speculation which partook largely of the nature of gambling, and

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often of "crooked" gambling at that, there was never any prevalence of actual, recognized gambling, such as constituted a leading feature of early fortune-hunting settlements elsewhere in the West. Roulette and faro did not flaunt themselves in men's faces in the Minnesota of those early days. Saloons were not prominent in the towns. Drunkenness was rare, and it was never the habit of men there to make walking arsenals of themselves and to go about playing the rôle of braggarts and ruffians. Crimes of violence were no more frequent in that newly-peopling region than in old and well-ordered communities.

These conditions are faithfully reflected in the one novel Edward Eggleston devoted to early life in Minnesota, and his explanation of them was partly by reference to the character of the immigration that peopled Minnesota, coming as it did largely from New England and the older States of the middle West, and partly by the shrewd sug-

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gestion that the lawlessness and violence in other pioneer communities have been greatly exaggerated for the sake of picturesqueness, by those who have written of them.

Yet in the Minnesota of that time the young Methodist preacher found need enough for his ministry and occasion enough for all his zeal.

He began his work there in the remoter regions along the Minnesota River—"the frontier of the frontier," he called it. His congregations were composed about equally of Indians, white settlers, hunters, trappers and half-breed voyageurs. His circuit covered a vast area, over which he traveled on foot, winter and summer, shod in Indian moccasins, and living out of doors almost as continually as the Indians themselves did.

His zeal in the work presently attracted the attention of the church authorities, and his abilities strongly commended him to them. Before he was twenty-one years of

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age—he had married at twenty—he was placed in charge of one of the largest churches in St. Paul, the capital and chief city of the newly-admitted State. He was afterwards stationed—in accordance with the itinerant system—successively in St. Peter's Stillwater and Winona. Often he fell ill, and was unable to accept a pastoral appointment.

Once, on the occasion of an Indian outbreak, he enlisted in the volunteers, mounted his horse and set out to help defend the border. In later life he was fond of telling, in an amused way, of how this soldiering episode ended for him. After a long and hurried march, which the frail youth endured only by making heavy drafts upon his indomitable spirit, the commander of his company came to him and said:

“Parson, you're a good fellow, but you're not strong enough for a soldier. Now, I've got more men than horses here, and I want you to quit as a man and let me

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have your horse for a strong young fellow to ride."

Edward agreed to an arrangement so obviously for the good of the service, though humiliating to himself. He turned his steed over to the "strong young fellow," and set out to walk back to the settlements. "Thus ingloriously," he used to say, "did my military experience end. I don't know whether I was 'honorably discharged' or not, but I suppose it amounted to that, as the State afterwards voluntarily paid me for my horse."

During the nine years of his life in Minnesota Edward made much of intellectual growth. Wherever he went and whatever the condition of his health might be he carried on his studies with tireless industry and dogged persistence, ceaselessly pursuing that systematic self-instruction to which he was indebted all his life for his education. During this time he read voluminously, in general literature and philosophy, in several

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languages. Little by little, too, he outgrew the narrowness of view that had led him to suspect his writing impulse as an instigation of the devil. He wrote a good deal now and published a little, for he had grown keenly self-critical in his literary work.

Very naturally his writing at that time was chiefly on more or less religious subjects; but by the year 1866 he had begun to write occasionally for secular periodicals, particularly *The Little Corporal*, a very widely circulated juvenile paper, published in Chicago. So marked was his success in this work, that when, in that year, his greatly impaired health compelled him to give up the ministry, he was invited to become associate editor of *The Little Corporal*. He finally quitted Minnesota and removed to Evanston, a suburb of Chicago, where he purchased the queerly constructed house shown in the illustration, making it his home for several years afterwards.

CHAPTER XVII.

The Editor and the Man of Letters.



THIS removal to Evanston in the spring of 1866 may be said to mark the beginning of Edward Eggleston's career as a secular writer. It also marked the end of his life as a Methodist minister; for while he retained his standing in the Minnesota Conference for several years afterwards, he never again accepted an "appointment" at the hands of his Bishop. And, except for his five years' pastorate of the wholly independent and creedless Church of Christian Endeavor, in Brooklyn, some years later—an episode of which a fuller account will be given in a subsequent chapter—he never again had charge of a church of any kind.

While editorially connected with *The Little Corporal* Edward gained a considerable

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reputation as a writer for children. It was at that time that he wrote for his paper the widely popular series of "Chicken Little Stories," and other tales for children, afterwards collected and published as "The Book of Queer Stories." In 1869, while these stories were still running in the paper, he brought out his first book, a tender little tale for children, entitled "Mr. Blake's Walking Stick." It was immediately successful, and to this day—nearly thirty-five years after its publication—it remains a favorite among the little folk.

The attractiveness of these books for young children is due to a certain rollicking good fellowship which runs through them, and to that never-failing sympathy with childhood which was always a dominant trait of their author's character. Even after he grew prematurely old in physique, Edward Eggleston never saw a child without making love to it, and quickly winning its heart in return. He had no touch or trace

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of forbidding dignity when talking with children. He never talked down at them, but made himself always their companion, and spoke to them with spiritual eyes on a level with their own. He held that one should make a *playmate*, not a *plaything* of the child, and he did so himself with a sincerity that never failed of its purpose. Indeed, there was always much of the sound-hearted boy in him to the end, even when he was not dealing with children. It was exceedingly winning.

In 1867 he took upon himself, in addition to his work on *The Little Corporal*, the chief editorship of *The National Sunday School Teacher*. That periodical was the outgrowth and exponent of the great and highly organized Sunday School movement which at that time interested the entire country, and in which John Wanamaker, Dwight L. Moody and others were Edward Eggleston's enthusiastic fellow workers. He was also active as a leader and effective as a speaker, in the

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Sunday School Institutes and conventions which were then so largely attended in all parts of the country.

All this while he was writing a good deal for a leading daily newspaper in Chicago, and thus acquiring a trenchant editorial style which served him well in later years.

More important, so far as his own career was concerned, is the fact that about 1869 he became general western correspondent of the New York *Independent*, writing over the signature of "Penholder." In that seething time of new adjustments in political affairs, and new thought in statesmanship, theology and philosophy, the *Independent* was a notable force. It was owned by Henry C. Bowen, and edited by Theodore Tilton, with Oliver Johnson, Charles F. Briggs, Dr. William Hayes Ward, Dr. Joshua Leavitt and other strong men on its staff, while at every point of importance its correspondents were selected men of the highest intellectual quality.

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Edward Eggleston's work as a correspondent attracted the attention of Mr. Bowen and Mr. Tilton, and in May, 1870, they invited him to join the staff of the paper as Book Editor and editorial writer. Accepting the place he removed to Brooklyn. He entered upon his new work with conscience and enthusiasm, and his health being now good, he brought all of his superb energy to bear upon it.

During the next year Theodore Tilton fell into controversy with the proprietor of the paper. The trouble grew indirectly out of the unfortunate affair between Tilton and Henry Ward Beecher. That matter had not yet come to a head, but it had begun to color all of Tilton's thought and to influence all his conduct. It is not my purpose to revive here a scandal that without doubt served for the time being gravely to impair the morals of a community in which it was daily and hourly discussed, even before it got into the courts and the newspapers. I

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mention it only because it is necessary to do so in explanation of what occurred.

Theodore Tilton was always a radical of radicals. It was he who wrote in a prospectus that the *Independent* would be "as radical as truth and justice can make it." During the anarchistic reign of the Commune in Paris after the Franco-Prussian War, he openly advocated the cause of the Commune, and even after all the facts of its riotous career were known, he ceaselessly defended it—not apologizing for its deeds of violence, arson and homicide, but justifying them as the righteous proceedings of liberty-loving men fighting against privilege and oppression.

His thinking was equally extreme on other subjects and his utterance was daring to the limit of audacity. I knew him well at that time. I was associated with him in the editorship of a daily newspaper which he conducted while yet editing the *Independent*. I greatly liked him for his liberal qualities,

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and, in common with all who knew him, admired his extraordinary brilliancy of intellect. I saw much of him, in the office and in his home, and he often consulted me with respect to his troubled personal affairs.

In answer to his demands I frequently gave him what I believe to have been good advice. He never followed it, but in this close personal contact I learned to know, better than most, what his mood was, and by that mood he was governed in nearly everything that he did. It was the mood of Sampson when he pulled the pillars down, and under its impulse he wrote and printed many articles in the *Independent* which awakened apprehension. Finally, on October 1, 1870, he wrote one which both shocked and alarmed the proprietor of the *Independent* and its readers. The editorial in question was entitled "Love, Marriage and Divorce," and was obviously the outcome of his brooding over his own domestic relations. A passage in it ran as follows:

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“The Divine moralist who preached the Sermon on the Mount, when He said ‘Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father in Heaven is perfect,’ held up an ideal of human character impossible of mortal attainment—the despair of flesh-clogged souls. In like manner, in the few and fragmentary notes which his biographers have saved of his utterances on marriage, he holds up an ideal, the highest ever conceived—beautiful to struggle after, but impossible to attain. He did not rest marriage on the mere legal union of two persons whom the law, uniting, enacts to be one flesh; but, transcending this tie and hallowing it, he taught a spiritual union which should be so subtle in its willing bond, so exclusive in its mutual allegiance and so reverent of its married mate that the brief indulgence of a single vagrant fancy was an infidelity to such wedlock.

“Who can abide this test? Judged by so immaculate a morality ‘there is none good, no not one.’”

Having thus suggested the futility of Christ’s teaching, and the uselessness of all strivings to obey it, the article argued that, with human nature what it is, the teachings of the Divine moralist justify divorce in the case of that lesser and lower marriage to which alone, as Tilton contended, human beings can attain.

The reckless audacity of this utterance, together with other things, precipitated the crisis that had long been drawing near. Two

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weeks after its publication Theodore Tilton ceased to be editor of the *Independent*, and Edward Eggleston was chosen to succeed him in that office.

Edward's contract of employment as editor-in-chief of the *Independent* was for a term of years, and he entered upon the work with a feeling that at last his opportunity in life had come to him. He had control of the tools with which high aspirations of service to his time and country and to humanity, might be wrought into high achievements. The *Independent* was one of the greatest and most influential organs of opinion in all the land. Its province embraced the whole field of thought and affairs. It dealt with politics, religion, literature and art, all with a strong hand. In each its control afforded to a strong man an enviable opportunity to impress his convictions upon men in a way to give them effect, and with the assistance of such a staff of other strong men as he had working with him, it would be

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difficult to imagine a position more alluring to a man of Edward's gifts and temperament.

But after seven months in the place a difference of opinion arose between him and the owner of the paper as to the political course it should pursue in a certain crisis, and, as the question was one involving his conscience, Edward asked and secured the privilege of resigning without waiting for the expiry of the six months' notice which the contract required him to give.

It scarcely needs saying that the necessity of doing this was a sore disappointment to hopes which had been exceedingly dear to him. But on a point of conscience he had never been accustomed to falter, and he did not falter now. He abandoned a position which was ideally well adapted to his purposes and aspirations. He surrendered what he regarded as the greatest opportunity likely ever to come to him and retired to his Brooklyn home to await such further opportunities as life might offer.

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These were not long in coming. His reputation as an editor had been fully made, and as soon as it became known that he was foot-loose, the publishers of *Hearth and Home* approached him with an offer which he presently accepted.

Then followed the struggle referred to in a former chapter, to rescue the paper from its moribund condition. This he did in the only way in which it could be done, namely by improving the character of the paper. He began by ridding it of every incapable who had been clinging, barnacle-like, to its staff, and putting better men in their places. Recognizing Mrs. Dodge's remarkable gifts, he insisted upon giving her a freer hand than she had ever been allowed before, especially in the way of wise expenditure for good matter and good pictures. Process picture making was unknown then. Every illustration must be drawn on wood and engraved by hand, so that illustration was expensive. But Edward insisted that

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no economy should be permitted to interfere with the execution of Mrs. Dodge's plans for her department. Indeed, he set his face against all economies that might in any way interfere with the supreme purpose of making the paper successful by making it worthy of success. I remember that, after I became his managing editor, and reported that I found in my possession a great mass of accepted manuscripts, mostly the work of amateurs—a legacy from the former administration—he bade me go through them, throwing out every one that in the least fell short of the new standard he had set up. I reminded him that the publishers were under obligation to pay for all articles already accepted. His reply was quick and resolute:

“Report them for payment. Then throw them into your waste paper basket. It is bad enough to have to pay for such stuff; it would be calamitous to print it. We can't afford to print a single unworthy article, at least until we have printed enough of the

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best to give the paper a character and a reputation."

As editor of the *Independent*, and in other relations, he had long been in close touch with pretty nearly all the writers in the country who might be made available, and he personally saw or wrote to all of them. Thus, in a brief time he drew into the paper's service a staff of capable writers, many of them widely known. He charged me in the meanwhile to be always keenly on the lookout for new writers of capacity. "The best thing an editor can do for his publication," he said, "is to develop a new writer, and let him make his name in connection with the paper."

One of our "finds" at this time was very notable. As the Christmas season approached, we found ourselves short-handed, and sought for some one to help us out. We found him in Philadelphia. He had been engaged in newspaper work for several years, and was familiar with methods, princi-

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ples and details. But he had attained to no editorial position sufficiently attractive to forbid his acceptance of the offer Edward made him for a temporary engagement on *Hearth and Home*. He came to us to do general utility work. He was a modest, unassuming man, but not lacking in that sufficient self-confidence which prompts and enables strong men to do capable work.

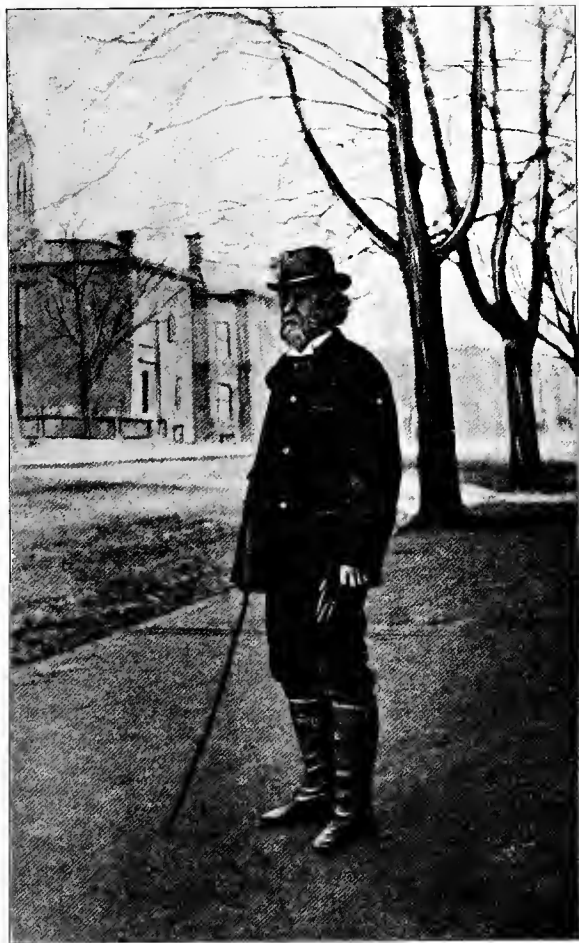
His name was Frank R. Stockton.

He had not been with us a week before Edward had discovered his quality, and changed his very temporary engagement into a permanent one. He remained with us until, upon the establishment of *St. Nicholas*, he went with Mrs. Dodge, to assist in making the really wonderful success which that periodical so quickly achieved. His later career as one of the foremost and most popular writers of his time, is known to all who read or care for books.

Edward followed "The Hoosier Schoolmaster" with "The End of the World"—

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another memory of the Hoosier life as he had known it in boyhood. In it he dealt somewhat with that strange episode in the religious life of the country, the Millerite craze. He had himself seen all this in his boyhood. He remembered with what fanatic faith men accepted guess-work interpretations of the peculiarly incomprehensible prophecies of Daniel; how the leaders of that movement worked out from Daniel's figures the very day on which the end of the world was to come, and proved it all as they might have proved any other "sum" in arithmetic. He remembered how busily believing women toiled to get their white ascension robes ready in time; how recklessly men left their fields untilled in anticipation of the coming day of judgment; how crazily men and women became excited as the appointed time drew near, some of them actually going mad; and how shrewdly sharpers played upon credulity and bought for a trifle the possessions of the deluded



EDWARD EGGLESTON
In Madison, Indiana January 1899

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ones. He remembered, as I do, the table oil-cloths, covered with "the figures of prophecy," which some manufacturer was enterprising enough to put upon a market eager for them, and which remained in practical domestic use long after the excitement that had made them marketable died out. It is a pity that nobody at that time was far-seeing enough to preserve one of those oil-cloths as a historic curiosity. Nobody seems to have done so, however, as Edward's offer of a hundred dollars for a single specimen, though long continued and widely advertised, brought no response.

It was characteristic of Edward that he regarded even this credulity and fanaticism with respect, as he looked back upon that time and made literary use of it. In our parents' house he, as a boy of five or six years old, heard nothing but contempt and ridicule for the craze while it was in progress. Our father would not permit the subject to be seriously discussed in the presence of his

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family. Our mother used smilingly to ridicule the folly of making ascension robes out of cotton cloth that cost a few cents a yard. And when she found that one in whom she felt any interest had been infected by the insanity, she would gently set forth a higher conception of God's ways and purposes than that which the doings and teachings of the Millerites implied. Yet in his mature years Edward always insisted upon regarding the human weakness which rendered such a fanaticism possible, with respectful pity rather than with contempt. In "The End of the World" he laughed, indeed, at the follies it involved; but he said:

"The intellectual attitude of those people, if it can be called an intellectual attitude, was entirely logical. If a man believes in prophecy at all, he must believe that it is intended to let men know what is going to happen. If the prophecies of the Old Testament were inspired revelations of the future, as nearly everybody at that time believed,

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the Power that inspired them must have intended men to find out what they meant. The Millerites believed that their leader had found this out, and they studied his interpretation only to find it so plausible that their minds could find no flaw in it. They were more logical and more consistent than the clergymen who preached against their delusion. After all, perhaps the fundamental mistake lay in believing in prophecy, but that mistake, if it is a mistake, was made, not by the Millerites only, but equally by those who opposed their doctrine."

It was always Edward Eggleston's habit to think honestly and fearlessly. If in his youth his views had been narrow and puritanical, it was only because there were no other views possible under the circumstances in which he was placed, to one who thought honestly and resolutely accepted that which he believed to be truth, making obedience to it the unfaltering rule of his life, no matter at what cost of self-restraint and self-

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sacrifice. He was taught that the Bible was unquestionably the one only revelation of God's thought to man. The only form in which he knew the Bible in his boyhood was the accepted English version, and he was taught to take that literally. The absolutely necessary result of such teaching to a boy of his character, was asceticism, puritanism—something akin in spirit to monasticism in its least enlightened forms.

But it was equally inevitable that a mind such as his, exercising itself in absolute obedience to a conscience that loved truth above all else, should outgrow these trammels of the intellect and shake them off.

At the time of which I am now writing Edward had done this in a very great degree. He had grown liberal. His enlarged knowledge had given him better points of view. His habit of looking with open eyes in his search for truth, had enabled him to make the most of those points of view. His extensive reading, in literature, philoso-

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phy and history, had taught him new principles of interpretation. His large and varied contact with men of every kind and class, from the trapper and half-breed on the frontier to the finest scholars and thinkers of his time, had enlarged his conceptions, not only of human kind, but of human life and its relations.

One other fact must be considered. The liberalization of thought and the enlargement of knowledge which he shared, were not his alone, but the common possession of all men who were accustomed to think. He was living in a more enlightened time than that of his boyhood. Even in those regions in which his childhood had been passed, the schoolmaster and the newspaper, and the circulating library, had been doing their work and doing it well. The narrow teachings that had been drilled into him in boyhood were no longer heard anywhere in the land. The harsh rigidity of life had been relaxed during that wonderful

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quarter of a century since he had first gone to school.

In theology Edward had grown both liberal and unsettled as to his beliefs—a change which was destined to be progressive and continuous. He was still religious by habit and sentiment, but all dogmatism had gone out of him. He was tolerant of everything but intolerance, and he was generously disposed even to look upon that with pity rather than condemnation in his mind.

He still retained his membership in the Minnesota Conference, partly from a feeling of good fellowship and partly because he felt a keen sympathy with the preachers out there in the good work they were doing for morality and the amelioration of life. But he had become so unorthodox in his beliefs that one of them threatened him about this time with a heresy prosecution because he wrote in one of his novels that it is only a theological quibble which denies


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to marriage an equal rank with baptism and the eucharist as a sacrament.

While Edward was writing "The End of the World," he left the work of editing the paper mainly to me, and when the second novel achieved a success approximately as great as that of "The Hoosier Schoolmaster," he decided to give up editorial tasks entirely, and devote himself exclusively to literary work. He resigned his place as editor, and I succeeded him in it.

CHAPTER XVIII.

The First of Authorship.

NDER Edward's wise direction *Hearth and Home* had by this time gained reputation and influence as a publication of consequence, not only because of the good literature it presented, but still more because of the ability of its editorial columns. In these all matters of importance—all public affairs of large consequence, all questions of education and all matters that in any vital way concerned the welfare of the people were discussed with care and thought, not only by Edward himself, and by the able editorial staff he had gathered about him, but also by other writers of unusual strength. Among these contributing editorial writers whose writing was so frequent as to render them almost members of the staff, were Helen

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Hunt, Mrs. L. I. G. Runkle, Rebecca Harding Davis, George E. Waring, Jr., Asa Gray, Edward Everett Hale, Mary G. Humphreys, and several others.

It was Edward's practice to write comparatively little himself on the editorial page. He rarely contributed more than one article in that department to any one number. It was his conviction that a variety of minds in editorial discussion is as important as a variety of topics. I remember that when Theodore Tilton set up his paper, *The Golden Age*, and said that he meant to write the whole editorial page, Edward said to him: "You'll score a failure, Theodore. No editorial page can live on the gushings of one man, however able and however brilliant he may be."

In the same way he absolutely refused to burden his mind with details or to waste his time over them, after he had got the office into a good state of organization. He left all such things to his managing editor and

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his subordinates, and devoted himself exclusively to the larger work of general direction.

As his conduct of the paper had won for it recognition and influence, so, by the time when "The End of the World" was published, his novels had multiplied its circulation many times over. He felt that he had accomplished the task undertaken. He had lifted the paper out of the mire and set it firmly on solid ground. He was anxious to rid himself of the harness, and he felt that he could do so without fear that his work would be undone by a weaker direction on the part of those whom he left to take up the task where he laid it down.

Incidentally, and in illustration of the difficulties Edward had met and overcome, it is of interest to relate some things that happened during the publication of the serials.

When "The Hoosier Schoolmaster" began to appear, a member of the publishing house was sorely troubled. He had been a

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bitter and vehement opponent of novels and novel reading. He had published articles of his own in denunciation of fiction and in rebuke of his friends in a great publishing house for putting forth literature of that character. He now began to suspect that "The Hoosier Schoolmaster" was in fact a novel, and he was shocked at the thought that it was appearing in a periodical published by himself. But it was manifestly multiplying the circulation of that periodical and changing its status from that of a losing venture to that of a paying property; so under the urgent insistence of his business partners he reconciled himself to the situation.

But when the story was about to appear in book form Edward wrote "A Novel" as sub-title, and the publisher referred to was again in a state of nervous agitation. He could in no wise consent to proclaim himself as a publisher of novels. In view of the large advance orders for the book he was

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eager to publish the novel, but he could not reconcile himself to the open admission that it was a novel.

A little later we began publishing Jean Ingelow's story, "Off the Skelligs," so that the paper had two serials running at the same time. One morning the novel-hating publisher called upon Edward with a copy each of *Hearth and Home* and one of the most sensational story papers then in existence. He spread the two out and said to Edward:

"If there is any difference between these two sheets I wish you would show me what it is. I can't discover it."

Edward heaved a little sigh of weariness and answered:

"If you cannot discover the difference for yourself I certainly cannot teach you to see it."

When we began publishing "The Hoosier Schoolmaster" this publisher went to Edward to offer a suggestion. The illustrations of the story were surrounded by text,

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of course, and where the text happened to include conversation the broken lines left blank ends next the picture. This publisher was a stickler for what he called "framing a picture" with its accompanying letter-press; so the happy thought seized him that Edward might insert enough words in each broken line of conversation to extend it to the margin of the illustrations. He had been at pains to fill out the lines with his pencil—making a row of o's—by way of showing how much better the thing would look if done in that way. I think he never quite forgave Edward for his refusal to tinker his text in the fashion suggested.

Upon resigning his editorial place, Edward agreed to write one more serial story for *Hearth and Home*, and he set to work upon it immediately. This time he chose for his theme the life in Minnesota as he had known it, and produced "The Mystery of Metropolisville." This was a broadening of his field somewhat, and the conditions in

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which the story was laid were quite different from those of the two Hoosier stories. In the earlier novels he had dealt with a life and people whose characteristics were well defined. In the new story he must depict a life that was formless as yet, and a people whose gathering together in one community was so recent that they could scarcely be thought of as one people. They were a conglomerate mass of humanity, utter strangers to each other. Coming from all parts of the country, as they had done, they had little in common. There were no well-defined characteristics, no prevalent habits, customs or ideas that the novelist could seize upon. For purposes of literary art, such a people afforded far less opportunity than did the Hoosiers. Yet the new story proved very successful both as a serial and in book form.

Edward was gravely dissatisfied with it when it was done, and he determined to write no more novels for a considerable time to come.

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He was not permitted to carry this determination into effect, for by this time editors and publishers were, metaphorically, sitting on his doorsteps in eager rivalry to secure a novel at his hands. In the meantime he had got a little rest, and his refreshed mind was subconsciously at work upon a new theme. He had always been impressed with the heroic self-sacrifice of the Methodist circuit riders, and the picturesqueness of their life in the early days in the West. The theme fascinated him, after the thought of using it in fiction had once entered his mind. He had known these men, and he had in some measure shared their life. Their inspiration had been his own through years of toil and hardship. His equipment was perfect for the sympathetic handling of the subject. Accordingly, he accepted an offer made to him by the editor of *The Christian Union*, and was soon at work on "The Circuit Rider, a Tale of the Heroic Age."

This story took him back again to the

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Hoosier life, but with a larger purpose and perhaps with a sounder conception of its significance. The piece was a new departure in other ways. It was more carefully wrought than its predecessors had been, for the reason that its author had leisure now, and did not write each week to furnish "copy" to clamorous printers against a pre-appointed day of issue. It was far more serious than the others had been, and far more literary. It gave proof of larger powers than he had shown before.

When "The Circuit Rider" was finished Edward suspended his work in the field of fiction, as he had meant to do before. "The Circuit Rider" was published in 1874. He did not publish another novel until 1878.

During that time of suspension he brought out no book except a little volume of juvenile stories. He was writing a good deal for the magazines, however, both over his own name in the general pages, and

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anonymously in the editorial departments. He was also compiling and editing two sumptuously published subscription books, the one called "Christ in Art," and the other "Christ in Literature."

CHAPTER XIX.

The Christian Endeavor Episode.



IN "The Hoosier Schoolmaster," as every reader of that story remembers, Ralph Hartsook and Bud Means organized themselves into the "Church of the Best Licks." It was Edward's dream some day to have charge of such a church in fact—creedless, caring nothing for dogmatic theology, exacting no profession of faith of its members, and devoting its endeavors solely to the betterment of men and women, the uplifting of those who were down, the encouragement of those who despaired, the strengthening of the weak and the amelioration of life in every way possible.

In the autumn of 1874 the opportunity to realize this dream came to him. He was asked to take charge of the Lee Avenue

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Congregational Church in Brooklyn. He frankly stated his condition of mind. He could not meet the requirements of any orthodox council, nor would he on any account take charge of a church which imposed any creed upon its members or exacted any profession of faith at their hands.

The church accepted his terms, abandoned its ecclesiastical relations, and changed its name to The Church of Christian Endeavor, a phrase which Edward devised as a dignified equivalent of The Church of the Best Licks.

For four or five years he carried on this philanthropic work with enthusiasm. He was mightily supported in it by other strong men whose sympathy with Christian Endeavor found expression in tireless work. The membership of the church grew rapidly, and its congregations were swelled to a multitude. Many of those who labored in this cause of uplifting were men and women of orthodox belief. Indeed the majority of

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the members were persons of that kind; for neither the church nor its pastor offered the smallest objection to any one's faith, whatever it might be. They insisted only that the church should itself set up no creed standards in its organized capacity. Every member was free to believe as he pleased, so long as he stood ready to aid the church's work of human betterment. One day a Quaker family applied to Edward for admission. They frankly said that if it were required that they should be baptized, they would submit themselves to the ordinance, but to them it would be an entirely meaningless form. Edward laid the case before the church, declaring his own conviction that baptism ought not to be required as a condition of membership, and the church voted, without a dissenting voice, to accept the Quakers without any requirement as to forms and ceremonies.

Some Unitarians, and many persons who had never formulated their beliefs even in

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their own minds, united with the church and aided earnestly in its work. But in the main its members were persons of orthodox beliefs, who were liberal enough in spirit to see no reason why they should exact like beliefs on the part of others as a condition of a harmonious working together for good.

It was no part of Edward's purpose to win anybody away from his faith. He made no war upon any man's creed. He made no effort to induce any other to accept his own views, or to think as he did on religious subjects. He never discussed such things in the pulpit or elsewhere. He simply did not care for creeds, or in any way concern himself with them. He was not at all an aggressive apostle of liberalism in theological belief; he never discussed that subject; he pleaded only for liberality in endeavors to help those who needed help and to better human conditions in every way possible.

He had an enthusiastic Sunday-school, outnumbering any other in Brooklyn, and he

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devised many ingenious ways in which to interest the children. He secured the assistance of his friends among orthodox clergymen and laymen, with now and then some one who had no church relations whatever, and induced them to come to his Sunday-school and talk to the children.

He built up a library in the church, contributing liberally to it himself, and inducing all his friends to contribute either money or books.

He organized a society of the young men for the perfectly free discussion of subjects of practical human interest. Into this society he had no trouble in drawing a large number of workingmen of active minds, who discussed there questions of tariff, trades unionism, the relations of capital and labor, and whatever else they were interested in as matters practically affecting their welfare in the world.

In brief, this was a church of the Best Licks, to which Abou Ben Adhem would

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have been welcomed as a typical representative of the prevailing spirit.

Its conduct and the guidance of its undertakings involved ceaseless labor on Edward's part. It was labor joyfully given, but it enormously overtaxed his meagre strength. After four or five years of it his nervous system completely broke down, and in 1879 he resigned his charge, thus finally quitting the ministry.

He sailed with his family for Europe immediately, intending to remain there for a prolonged period. But before going he told me what I had already guessed, namely, that the strain which had done more than all else to bring on his collapse, was not that of ceaseless work, but that of a mind ill at ease. When he assumed charge of that church he had indeed lost his belief in dogmatic theology, but he retained enough of faith to enable him to preach acceptably, with a little care. During the four years or more of his pastorate, through reading, study, and ear-

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nest thought, even this small share of faith had slipped away from him, until at the last he frankly said to me, something like this:

“There isn’t a shred or a raveling of belief in the supernatural left in me. How can I go on preaching, when in doing so I seem, to others at least, to profess what I no longer believe? For the last year I have had to study carefully every word I have spoken from the pulpit, lest I use terms that might imply a faith which I have not, and thus, while preaching morality, be guilty of an immorality on my own account. It has been a terrible strain, a sore conflict, and my health has given way under it. I have wanted to go on with this work, because of the great good it is doing to others. If it could have been completely secularized, and so stripped of all appearance of a religious effort, I should have had strength to continue it. As it is, I should have felt myself in conscience bound to give it up, even if my strength had

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held out. My only hope is that some one may be found who can carry it on in the form and name of religion, without having to compromise with his conscience, as I should have to do with mine."

Thus ended another chapter of Edward Eggleston's life.

From that hour forward he never entered a pulpit. He had already withdrawn from the Methodist church, as well as from its ministry, and while he never antagonized the faith he had long and conscientiously held, he never concealed the fact that he no longer accepted any part of it.

CHAPTER XX.

The Historical Work of Twenty Years.



WHEN he sailed for Europe in 1879 Edward's means were scant. During the four or five years given to the Christian Endeavor enterprise he had devoted practically all of his salary to the work in which he felt so vital an interest. In the meanwhile he had depended for the support of his family upon his copyrights and upon his labors with the pen. He wrote a good deal for the magazines, at rates of pay which were then deemed very liberal, and in 1878 he brought out a new novel, "Roxy"—his first book in four years.

"Roxy" was founded upon an occurrence that had been known to both of us in youth, an occurrence which brought out the unconscious heroism of a good, simple-minded woman, in humble life, in



EDWARD EGGLESTON
From a photograph made in Washington, 1901

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a way that would be impossible to most women.

Curiously enough, one newspaper critic at least, and perhaps others, criticised the story as immoral, because it hinged upon a sinful incident. The criticism was as applicable to Hawthorne's "Scarlet Letter" as to "Roxy." It utterly ignored the fact that the sinful incident was handled with the extreme of delicacy, and with the highest moral purpose and effect. To be consistent the critic must have condemned all preachers for mentioning theft, murder, robbery or any other sin for the purpose of rebuking it.

Edward knew how to live comfortably at small cost, whether in Europe or at home, and so he made no use of a generosity which was at this time extended to him. Roswell Smith, publisher and chief owner of *Scribner's Monthly*—afterwards *The Century Magazine*—had become one of Edward's most devoted friends. He had made so great a success of the magazine that his fortune was now

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ample, and, with one of those generous impulses which always governed his conduct, he went to Edward one day, just before the date of sailing, and bade him be at ease during his stay abroad. "My purse is absolutely at your disposal," he said. "Draw upon me for whatever money you need, whenever you want it, and pray don't think of the sum, whatever it may be, as a debt to be repaid. I shall consider it only a privilege if you allow me to help you regain your strength. I want to *endow your work* for the public's sake, and you must let me do so."

Edward was much too independent of spirit to accept such an offer, though he knew that it was made with the utmost sincerity. But he never forgot the generosity of it. "There are not many such men as Roswell Smith," he used to say, "in this money-grubbing world of ours."

Edward's first concern in Europe was to get well by rest. For a time he did no work—not even reading a book for entertainment.

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He went up into the Swiss mountains and lived there for a time among the peasants, in the district from which our Vevay Swiss people had emigrated. He found among them relatives and near friends of the Vevay settlers, and they never tired of questioning him concerning the American Vevay and its people.

He lived out of doors during his waking hours, sometimes going into the vineyards and helping in the work of grape gathering. On these occasions the stout peasant women would watch carefully for the filling of his basket, and when it was full one of them would hurriedly snatch it away and carry it to the receptacle into which all the baskets must be emptied. They were determined that "the dear monsieur" should do no heavy work. When the hour came for quitting the vineyard the peasants would line themselves up in two rows and ask him to pass through and walk in front of them. When he wandered along a road, accom-

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panied by his blonde-haired little granddaughter, the peasants would select the finest clusters of grapes, arrange them upon leaves and present them to her with positive reverence for a child whom they called "the little American angel," because of her fair face and blonde locks.

After a time Edward went to Paris, London and Venice, living in each of those cities for months at a time. It was in Venice that he wrote "The Hoosier School Boy," and later "The Graysons." He used to say that it interested him mightily, after living all day in the atmosphere of the great primitive West, where the scene of his story was laid, to pass almost instantly into the historic surroundings of Venice, which he could do merely by throwing down his pen and going out of doors. One can easily understand the fascination a thought of that kind must have had for an imaginative man.

Apart from the recovery of his health, the most important result of his residence in

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Europe was the suggestion that came to him there as to his future work. It was from the reflective calm of that life that he wrote to me, about the beginning of the year 1880, telling me of his newly formed plan.

"I am going to write a series of volumes," he wrote, "which together shall constitute a History of Life in the United States—not a history of the United States, bear in mind, but a history of life there, the life of the people, the sources of their ideas and habits, the course of their development from beginnings. These beginnings will be carefully studied in the first volume. Beyond that my plans for the ordering of the material are not fully formed. It will be a work designed to answer the questions 'How?' and 'Whence?' and 'Why?' All this will require a great deal of research, but I stand ready to give ten years of my life to the task, if necessary."

In the event the research required proved to be much greater even than he had

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anticipated. He gave not ten, but twenty years to the work, and died at last leaving it scarcely more than begun. The two volumes that were published—"The Beginners of a Nation" and "The Transit of Civilization," are the only direct fruits we have or ever shall have of that twenty years of ceaseless and scholarly study. But these alone are well worth all that they cost of toilsome research, while the incidental fruit of his labors is perhaps of even greater value to the public. These are found in those school histories and the like, in which he fairly revolutionized the teaching of history in schools, and devised new methods so good that other writers of school history have felt it necessary to borrow them—sometimes copying so closely as to excite wonder and invite criticism.

Having conceived this undertaking, Edward set to work upon it at once. For years he studied in the British Museum, the French National Library, and in many rich

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private libraries in England and France which were generously thrown open to him. Then he returned to America, and set himself to the task of exhausting the resources of the public and private libraries in this country—the Astor and Lenox in New York, the Boston Public Library and the Athenæum in Boston, the Congressional Library in Washington, many college collections and a multitude of private libraries, besides a great number of manuscript letters and records preserved in the homes of old colonial families.

In prosecuting his researches he made many interesting “finds,” including one very notable one. This was a manuscript account of Bacon’s Rebellion, written by Nathaniel Bacon himself. Edward came upon it by accident one day while looking through a wagon load of unsorted and unexamined manuscripts in the British Museum.

One thing that made Edward’s researches time-consuming was his propensity to be-

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come interested in whatever he read, whether it bore directly on his subject or not. He would read books through, in which only a chapter perhaps was necessary to his purpose. Sometimes he became interested in books that had nothing in them of importance to him, and very often, as he once told me, the reading of a week or more would result in giving him material only for a brief paragraph, or perhaps a single line in his own work.

Another thing that prolonged his researches beyond the time he had assigned to them, was his early discovery that he could in no wise trust secondary authorities, but must in every case explore the originals. He found that the trustworthiness of secondary authorities was impaired by many influences. Some of them had been carelessly written, with too little knowledge and too little conscientiousness in research. Some were in error because of the absence of opportunity on the part of their authors to

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get at the whole truth. Some erred through misinterpretation of facts known, and some through a too ready and too confident acceptance of traditional belief. Prejudice marred some, and in many cases the truth was perverted in obedience to local pride or hero worship, or patriotic enthusiasm, or partisanship, or, most frequently of all, a mistaken pride of ancestry. Edward found, for example, that the Pilgrims and Puritans on the one hand, and the ancestors of the "First Families of Virginia" on the other, were a much more commonplace set of people than their book-writing descendants had agreed in representing them to be.

There was no glamour upon him. He sought for truth with wide open eyes, and did not blink when he found it to be unlovely and destructive of commonly accepted beliefs. The introduction he wrote to "The Beginners of a Nation" was positively distressing to many, and it even angered some by its relentless truthfulness and its iconoclastic

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lack of reverence for the past and its people. But it was a simple piece of truth telling, by one who had taken pains to find out the truth and whose sole purpose it was to reveal it.

Parts of the book—rather more than a dozen chapters of it, each complete as a study, were published from time to time in the *Century Magazine*, but it was not until late in the nineties that "The Beginners of a Nation" appeared in book form. It was followed a year or two later by the second volume, entitled "The Transit of Civilization."

With this second work, fascinating as its interest is, Edward was gravely dissatisfied. It was not what he had intended it to be. It was, as he said, born before its time. That is to say, finding that his health was failing, he feared that death might come to him before he could complete the book in the form and with the fulness he had intended to give it. In order that his years of work upon it, and the rich results of his seventeenth cen-

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tury explorations might not be wholly lost to scholarship and history, he decided to put the volume into such shape as he had strength left to give it, and thus to publish it.

I am frequently asked by letter and in person, whether it may not be possible for some other hand to write the other volumes of his "History of Life in the United States," using the rich store of materials he had collected. I am obliged to answer no. The greater part of his materials he carried only in his own memory. The notes that would have enabled him, had he lived, to do the work intended, are not of a kind to be used by any other. They were scarcely more than mnemonic hints and suggestions. Whatever their value might have been to him, they would have no fruitfulness of suggestion to any other mind.

But the work thus lost was not wholly without profit to the public. It was as an outcome of that work that he wrote his school histories and the "Household History

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of the United States." Something has already been said in this chapter with respect to the good achieved by the publication of these smaller works, not only through their use in schools and families throughout the country, but indirectly through the radical changes they compelled in the methods of school history-writing on the part of other workers in that field, and in the system of teaching the history of our country to its youth.

In those later years, when he felt that his working power was failing and realized that he could never complete the great work of his life, he felt a keen regret of course; but he confronted the necessity of leaving his task unfinished with a calm philosophy and was content.

CHAPTER XXI.

The Light Goes Out.

DURING his stay in Europe, and after his return to this country, Edward diligently explored the book-shops and attended book sales in search of old and rare books in many languages, on subjects related to his historical studies. For the most part these were books not to be found in public libraries anywhere.

He had built a home for his books at Lake George, a structure of artistic beauty, with walls made of the native stone—trap rock—which always breaks in a way to show at least one perfectly straight side. He now added to this another building of like construction, as a house for himself, the two structures standing a little way apart and on different levels, but being connected by a slate-roofed covered way.

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Here he made his home, except that during the colder months of the year he occupied an apartment in New York. He traveled a good deal at this time, partly in search of materials, and partly for the sake of his wife's health, which was failing. During one of their trips to the South she died in February, 1889, and the loneliness of his life was relieved only by hard and sometimes excessive work.

In October, 1891, he married his second wife, Frances E. Goode, of Madison, Indiana, a distant relative whom he had known from her childhood. She survives him.

After his second marriage he established a little home in Madison for occasional occupancy, in order that his wife might pass some months of every year near her own people. His permanent residence was still at Lake George, but, besides spending some time in Madison each year, he frequently lived for months at a time in Washington or New York, and toward the end he spent the

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worst months of each winter in the far South. Fortunately his books had placed him financially in easy circumstances, so that he was free to go and come at will, and live wherever he found it most comfortable. In the summer he was always at his Lake George home, where he passed all his waking hours among his books or walking through the woodlands of the mountains round about. He usually went to Lake George in May, and remained there until the snow began to fly in November or December.

All this time he was at work upon his history, but he found time to produce a number of school books, besides his "Household History," and one novel, "The Faith Doctor," which appeared in 1891. This was the last novel he ever wrote, and the only one the scene of which he laid elsewhere than in the West. It deals with New York life, and for explanation of this departure from his usual practice, he urged that, after all, he

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had lived in New York longer than he had ever lived anywhere else, and knew New York life better than he did that of any other part of the country. His theme gave him opportunity also to study and depict certain very interesting phases of character, as affected by religious beliefs and enthusiasms. His heroine, around whom the story is written, was drawn with a peculiarly strong and deft hand, all the more so because, in her enthusiasm, her conscientiousness and her blind, self-sacrificing devotion to duty as she understood it, she very closely resembled himself in his youth and young manhood. He knew what Agatha thought and felt at every emotional crisis, because he had thought and felt in the same way once upon a time.

Two years later he published a collection of short stories entitled "Duffels," and that was the last excursion he ever made into the field of fiction, great or small. Indeed a great and growing distaste for fiction came upon him about this time. When a few

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years before his death, I wrote a boys' story called "The Last of the Flatboats," and made one of the characters a close, almost photographic portrait of himself as he had been in boyhood, he lovingly listened while his wife read the story to him. But, a little later, when one of my novels was published, he said to me:

"I enjoyed the boys' book, Geordie, but I can't listen to the reading of a novel, even though you did write it."

About three years before his death he was stricken suddenly one day with blindness in one eye. He believed this to be a slight stroke of apoplexy, as subsequent events clearly showed that it was. But the oculists whom he consulted at the time made a different diagnosis, and after a little while the sight came back to the eye affected.

After that there was a slow but steady and continuous decline of strength and activity. Edward's mind remained clear and his thinking vigorous, but there was some

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loss of memory, some forgetfulness of words, and now and then some confusion of things remembered. The gout with which he had suffered a good deal, seemed to grow steadily less severe, and his physical health was excellent. But he walked with some difficulty and lost the flexibility of his muscles. It was sometimes difficult for him to seat himself or to rise from a chair.

He continued to work a little now and then, both upon his "History of Life" and upon a school book that is not yet published, which was the very last literary work he ever attempted.

In the spring of 1902 he grew so much worse that he entirely ceased to attempt work of any kind. He found it distressing to write a letter, or even a note, yet he suffered no pain of any kind, enjoyed converse with his friends, and seemed altogether happy in his Lake George home. His cottage and mine—a few hundred yards away—were the only ones occupied so early in the year. One

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afternoon, having finished my writing for the day, I decided to go fishing for an hour or so, and, seeing me preparing, Edward called to me, saying that he would go with me. He had quite ceased to go on the water, because he was suffering, not only with a muscular stiffness which rendered it well nigh impossible for him to get into or out of a boat, but with a giddiness which rendered boating disagreeable. But I happened to have a broad, flat-bottomed fishing boat of the sharpie type, with a broad stern and extraordinary steadiness in the water, and Edward thought he might manage to get into that. I backed the stern up against a pier and he succeeded in getting in.

As we fished, Edward presently dropped his rod overboard and the heavy reel quickly carried it to the bottom. He laughed at the incident, saying:

“I didn’t know I was letting go my hold. Somehow I don’t always know what my hands are doing.”

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I offered him the use of my rod, but he declined, saying:

"I really don't want to fish. I only want to sit here in a boat with you this once more before I die."

I insisted that he mustn't talk about dying, whereupon he said:

"Oh, don't imagine that I'm bothering about that. I know I have only a brief time to live now, and I'm not going to spend that little while in worrying. Whenever death wants me, I am ready. I've 'had my fling' and the game is nearly over. The doctors say differently, but I know my own condition far better than they do. I am afflicted almost constantly with what they call festination—a tendency to run when I walk, to keep from falling forward. One symptom which usually accompanies festination is lacking in my case, and because of its absence the doctors insist that I have no festination at all. Nevertheless, I have it very markedly. I have to run when I try to walk, and I have the great-

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est difficulty to keep from falling forward on my face.

"No, Geordie, I have not long to live, but I am very happy. I'm glad to be with you in your boat to-day, for it is my last time on the water. Do you know, the first time I was ever in a row-boat, *you* rowed me, sturdy little fellow that you were? It pleases me to have you for my oarsman this last time."

I was at this time staying quite alone in my cottage and taking my meals at the country post-office nearby, my family being detained in town by my son's examinations. A day or two after the boating incident Edward's wife begged me to take all my meals at her house, saying that Edward seemed specially to want me with him as much as possible. My work was very heavy just then, so that except at meal-time it was very difficult for me to be with him, but I could do this much for his gratification, and I did it gladly.

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He talked little at these times, and never with aggressive interest in his theme; but his thinking seemed as clear as ever, and his gentle humor enlivened everything he said.

One morning early in June I went to his house for breakfast, and found him in a distressing condition. He had been stricken with a cerebral hemorrhage during the night, and was now nearly helpless. During the next two months he continued in this state. He could walk a little; he could come to the table with a little help, and now and then he would ask to be helped into his library, where he would sit and look lovingly at his books. But he could talk scarcely at all. He could utter only brief, fragmentary sentences, and that with difficulty.

Finally, near the end of August, he was stricken again, and for eight days after that he lay unconscious. Then came the end, on the 4th of September.

A brilliant mind had gone out. A life

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of extraordinary activity had ceased to be. A heart that had been always loving and generous, a heart that had pulsed with all human sympathy, and with high enthusiasm in the service of others, had grown forever still.

He had suffered no pain during all those last months, and had known no worry. The tender and judicious ministry of a nobly devoted wife was his at every hour of every day. He had gone to his death as in youth he had planned to do, "like one who wraps the drapery of his couch about him, and lies down to pleasant dreams."

I think I do not suffer my affection to warp my judgment when I say that Edward Eggleston was the best man I ever knew. From beginning to end of his life he not only never did a wrong to any human being, but he never failed to render any service in his power to every one who had need of it, no matter at what cost of self-sacrifice. He lived always for others, never for himself.

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His generosity was not so much a habit as an integral part of his character, and it needed no large occasion, no strong appeal to call it into activity. He was generous in small ways as well as large. He was especially generous in his judgments of others, whose wrong doings he looked upon as the results of a weakness which they could not help, rather than as faults for which they should be held responsible.

Never once in all his life, I am firmly persuaded, did Edward Eggleston give just offence to his own exceedingly sensitive conscience; never did he consciously do a wrong or omit to discharge a duty.

So much I take the liberty of saying in absolute sincerity to those thousands who knew this man only through his writings. To those who knew him personally, nothing need be said in praise of his nobility of character.

THE END.

